

Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



by Father George Tickell

Front Matter

We approve of this Translation from the French of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by the Rev. George Tickell, S. J., trusting that it will promote devotion amongst the Faithful, and answer the ends which the Translator professes in his Preface.

- *Bishop William Turner*
 - *Bishop's House*
 - *Diocese of Salford, England*
 - *1 June 1858*
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Leyton, N.R.
13 June 1858

Dear F. Tickell,

Through an accident, I have been prevented acknowledging, till today, the receipt of your "Month of the S. Heart." I thank you very sincerely for it, and trust that it will do all that good it is calculated to do, and tend to promote the devotion, now so dear to all faithful Souls, of all countries, towards the Love of our B. Redeemer.

Wishing you every blessing,
I am ever
Your affectionate Sert. in Xt.
N. Card. Wiseman

To Miss Tempest, of Broughton Hall, to whose piety the Society of Jesus in England is indebted for the first church, raised in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, this translation is respectfully dedicated.

To The Blessed Virgin Mary

O Virgin, purer than the light!
Mother of God! Thy welcome Name,

Linked by a Mother's dearest right,
Still by Thy Son's its place must claim.

To form Thy Jesus' Sacred Heart,
Mary! Thy Heart its life-blood gave;
With His in joy it bears its part,
With His it bleeds, mankind to save.

In vain an entrance do we seek
To Jesus' Heart, except through Thine;
To Thy dear Son, O Mother! speak,
And bid His Heart enkindle mine.

Translators Preface

The fact, that the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as it was first made known to the Venerable Mary Margaret, rests upon the foundation of a private revelation, can present no difficulty to the mind of any one, who reflects upon the wonderful condescension shown, in every age, by Almighty God, in His dealings with holy souls. Not to speak, in detail, of His communications with our first Parents, with the Patriarchs, with holy Job, with Samuel, David, Solomon, and with the Prophets in general; what a marvellous familiarity is implied in the account, given in Holy Scripture, of His intercourse with Moses; "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man is wont to speak to his friend." (Exodus 33:11)

If such was His conduct under the Jewish Law, what might we not expect under the Law of Grace, which was to be delivered to man by the Incarnate Son of God with His own lips? This Law had been already characterized by the Prophet Joel, as a dispensation, in which such communications should be frequent. "It shall come to pass, after this, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." (2:28) This was verified, in the first instance, according to the explanation of Saint Peter, when the Holy Ghost came down in tongues of fire, on the day of Pentecost; we witness its further fulfilment in the lives of the Saints, throughout the subsequent history of the Church. It is enough, without entering into an enumeration, which might begin with the Apostolic age, and be continued to the present, to refer to the lives of Saint Theresa, Saint Bridget, Saint Mechtildis, Saint Gertrude. A well known spiritualist, Master John Avila, speaking of God's secret dealings with His servants, as far as they had come under his notice, says, that they are so wonderful, that, if published, they would hardly be believed.

Many of the devotions, most familiar to the Faithful, have taken their rise in private revelations. Two instances may be cited, which are familiar to all. The devotion to the Scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel, which is so widely spread and so deeply rooted amongst the Faithful, owes its origin, as most Catholics are aware,

to the apparition of our Blessed Lady, in the thirteenth century, to Saint Simon Stock, a countryman of our own, General of the Carmelites, to whom she communicated this holy badge of her servants. This apparition (to cite no other testimonies in its support) is spoken of, as well known, by Benedict XIV, no mean authority upon such a question. (De Canoniz. Lib. iv. P. 2. c. ix. § 10.) It is to a private revelation, that the Faithful are indebted for the Feast of Corpus Christi. In the year 1210, our divine Lord made known to Blessed Juliana His wish, that a special Feast should be instituted to honour His Sacred Body. Urban IV. alludes to this, in the Bull of the institution of that Feast; "We understood formerly," are his words, "whilst in an inferior rank, that certain Catholics had received a revelation from heaven, to the effect that such a Feast should be generally celebrated in the Church."

No objection, then, can be urged against the devotion to the Sacred Heart, on the ground of its resting upon a private revelation; as we see that Almighty God has been pleased so frequently to communicate in this manner with His servants, and that two devotions, so well known amongst Catholics, owe their existence to such an origin.

But it should never be forgotten that, though the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the particular manner in which it is now practiced by the Faithful, dates from the revelation made by our divine Lord Himself to the Venerable Mary Margaret; still it rests, substantially, upon its own intrinsic grounds, irrespective of any particular revelation.

The Sacred Heart forms a part of the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord; and, as such, by reason of its hypostatic union with the Eternal Word, claims, by its own right, our highest adoration. As such, it has been the object of the adoration of the Faithful, from the very beginning of the Church. Saints, in all ages, have adored the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Saint Augustine, Saint Bernard, Saint Gertrude, recommend this devotion, in language which might be mistaken for that with which we are familiar, at the present day. Saint Gertrude was given to understand by our Divine Lord, that this same devotion, which she had so much at heart, was reserved by Him, to be revealed in a special manner, at a later time, as a last

effort of His love. This revelation He has made, through the means of His servant, the Venerable Mary Margaret.

What, then, are the peculiar characteristics which distinguish the devotion to the Sacred Heart, as thus revealed? In the first place, our Blessed Lord has declared His wish, that such a devotion should be practiced by the Faithful; He has specified, in what manner He would have it practiced; He has expressed the end to which these practices should be directed; and He has attached to them the most abundant promises. "I ask," are His words, "that the first Friday, after the Octave of Corpus Christi, be set apart for a special Feast to honour my Heart, by making an act of reparation to it, and by receiving Holy Communion, on that day, in order to repair the indignities, which it has received, during the time that it has been exposed on my altars; and I promise, that my Heart shall dilate itself, to shed in abundance the influence of its divine love upon all who shall pay it this honour, or procure it to be paid." Our Blessed Saviour would have this honour paid to His Sacred Heart; and He would have it paid, in order to repair the indignities, which that Sacred Heart has met with at the hands of men, especially in the Blessed Sacrament.

The *object*, then, of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, as our Blessed Saviour has Himself declared, is the Sacred Heart itself; the end of the devotion is, to acknowledge the love of that Sacred Heart, and to make reparation to it.

Now; any honour which is paid to the Sacred Body of our Lord, or to any portion of that Sacred Body, has, for its *ultimate object*, the Person of the Eternal Word, to which the Sacred Body, and every portion of it, is hypostatically united. The devotion, then, to the Sacred Heart, as a portion of that Sacred Body, has, for its *ultimate object*, the divine Person of our Blessed Lord; the *immediate object* of this devotion is, if the *material* object be considered, the Sacred Heart itself; if the *spiritual* object, the love of our Blessed Saviour, shown especially in His Death, and in the Blessed Sacrament as a memorial of His Death. The Sacred Heart may be aptly regarded as the seat of this love, and it is also the symbol of it. As revealed to the Venerable Mary Margaret by Jesus Himself, how powerfully does it speak the tale of His love. The flames, which burst forth

from the Sacred Heart, express the ardour of its divine love; the Cross, with which it is surmounted, and the crown of thorns which encircles it, are emblems of the Passion and Death of our divine Lord, by which His love has been especially shown for man. The *end* of the devotion, is to acknowledge this love, and to make reparation for the indignities which it has met with, especially in the Blessed Sacrament. The *reward*, attached to the practice of this devotion, is an abundant communication of divine grace.

The Month of the Sacred Heart is divided into thirty-three days; this number has been selected in order to honour the thirty-three years of our Blessed Lord's mortal life upon earth. Although this devotion may be practised, with advantage, during any period of the year, the Month of June is commonly chosen as the most appropriate, for honouring the Sacred Heart. It is the month, in which the Feast of Corpus Christi most frequently falls, and that of the Sacred Heart always. It follows, also, immediately upon the Month of May; and there can be no better introduction to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, than through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

A consideration is given for each day, together with a pious practice for the day, and an ejaculatory prayer. Those who join in the devotion of the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, are recommended to renew the Act of Consecration, at the beginning of the Exercises for each day; and to repeat the double invocation of the Sacred Hearts, three times, at the conclusion of the consideration.

A translation of this work appeared in English, several years ago; the author of the present translation became aware of the fact, only after the present translation had been completed.

It may be interesting to the reader to know, that the work, from which this translation is made, is held in high esteem on the Continent. It first appeared in 1836, and has already reached the eighteenth Edition; no fewer than 10,000 copies are sold annually.

- *Stonyhurst*

- *Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, 1858*

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

To be recited each day of the Month.

To Thee, O Jesus! I consecrate my heart; do Thou secure it within Thine. In Thy Heart I wish to take up my abode, and through the love of Thy Heart I wish to love. May I live in Thy Heart, unknown to the world, and known only to Thee. In Thy Heart, I shall find that consuming love, with which mine should be all on fire; in it I hope to find strength, light, and true consolation. If I am fainting, it will give me courage; if I am sad, it will give me joy; if I am disquieted and troubled, it will give me confidence.

O Heart of Jesus! may my heart be an altar ever burning with the fire of Thy love; may my tongue be employed in making known Thy goodness; may my eyes be unceasingly fixed upon Thy wound; may my mind constantly meditate on Thy adorable perfections; may my memory for ever preserve the recollection of Thy mercies; may my whole being, O Jesus! express my love for Thy Sacred Heart; and may my heart be ever ready to make any sacrifice for Thee.

O Heart of Mary! next to the Heart of Jesus, the most amiable, compassionate, and merciful of all hearts, present this my consecration, my love, and my resolutions to the Heart of Thy Son. Through Thee He will be moved to compassion for our miseries, and will deliver us from them; and thus, O Mother of Jesus! after being our protectress upon earth, Thou wilt be our Queen for ever in heaven. Amen.

First Day - Origin and Establishment of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is as ancient as the Church. It commenced upon the Cross, from the moment when this divine Heart, pierced by the soldier's spear, opened to the faithful an inviolable place of refuge. When the first Christians and the martyrs, with that faith and love, which made them triumph over torments and death itself, kissed the wounds of Jesus crucified, who can doubt that in applying their lips to the wounded side of their Redeemer, as they meditated on His Passion, they thought at the same time of His Sacred Heart, and of its infinite love which seemed to burst forth in flames through that sacred opening in His side? Thus too did the greatest saints of every age, Saint Augustin, Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Gertrude, Saint Meclitildis, Saint Catharine of Sienna, penetrate the secret of this devotion, long before it was proposed in any special revelation. But it was reserved for the seventeenth century to see the Sacred Heart of Jesus honoured by a public worship, and for France to give birth to this devotion. The person whom God employed to make known His designs of mercy in the establishment of this devotion, was a simple Religious of the Visitation, at Paray le Monial, in Charolais, known by the name of Mary Margaret.

Jesus Christ, who had already favoured her with His most precious gifts, appeared to her one day, and said; "My divine Heart is so full of love for men, that, no longer able to restrain the flames of its burning charity, it must needs spread them abroad by every means, and manifest itself to men, to enrich them with the treasures which it contains. To you I disclose these priceless treasures; they contain the graces of sanctification and salvation necessary to draw mankind from the abyss of perdition."

The designs of our Divine Lord were made known to Venerable Mary Margaret some time afterwards in a still clearer manner. "Whilst praying before the Blessed Sacrament," she says, "one day within its octave, I received from God excessive graces of His love. As I felt myself moved with the desire of making Him a return of

love for love, He said to me; 'You cannot give me any greater mark of your love than by doing what I have already so often asked of you.' Upon this, disclosing to me His Divine Heart, He said to me: 'Behold this Heart, which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, in order to testify to them its love; and in return I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, in the neglect, irreverence, sacrileges and coldness which I meet with from them in my Sacrament of love. But what afflicts me most is, that I receive this treatment from hearts which are specially consecrated to me. For this reason, I ask you to procure the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi to be set apart as a special feast in honour of my Heart, by making an act of reparation, and communicating on that day, in order to atone for the indignities which it has received during the time that it has been exposed upon my altars: and I promise that my Heart shall dilate itself to shed in abundance the influence of its divine love upon those who shall render it this honour, or procure it to be rendered.'" The humble religious replied; "To whom, O Lord, dost Thou address Thyself? to so wretched a creature, so poor a sinner, that her unworthiness would be even capable of hindering the accomplishment of Thy design. Thou hast so many generous souls to execute it." "Do you not know then," replied our Lord, "that I make use of the weakest instruments to confound the strong, and that it is in the little and poor of spirit that I display my power with greater splendour, in order that they may attribute nothing to themselves?" "Do Thou give me, then," rejoined the sister, "the means of doing what Thou commandest."

Upon this our Lord added: "Address yourself to my servant (this was Father de la Colombiere, S. J.) and tell him from me to do what he can to establish this devotion, and to afford this gratification to my heart. Let him not be discouraged at the difficulties which he will meet with, for there will be no lack of them; but let him remember that those alone are all-powerful who distrust themselves, and place all their confidence in me."

Father de la Colombiere, who had examined the sanctity of this religious with great care, and was satisfied by evident marks of the truth of her communications with God, considered himself called to contribute to the establishment of so holy a devotion, especially as

it presented nothing which was open to suspicion. He began with himself, and wished to be the first disciple of the Heart of Jesus, and the first adorer of His love, according to the directions prescribed to the sister Mary Margaret. He accordingly consecrated himself to this Sacred Heart, on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, June 21, 1675, a day which may be regarded as that on which the Heart of Jesus made its first conquest.

Since that time, this devotion, censured and combatted, as are all the works of God, has been at length established with marvellous success throughout the whole world, especially after it had received the solemn approval of the Holy See. Thus did the event prove how justly founded was the confidence of the Venerable Mary Margaret, when she said: "Though I should see the whole world let loose in opposition to this devotion, I should never despair of seeing it established, since I have received an assurance of it from the mouth of our B. Saviour Himself." - *Life of Mary Margaret by Languet*.

Practice - Engage every one, over whom you have any influence, to celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi; to receive Holy Communion on that day, and to make an act of reparation in atonement for the negligences, scandals, sacrileges, and other faults committed against the adorable Eucharist.

Prayer - Draw me, O Heart of Jesus; we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

These invocations should be repeated three times after each meditation. Many persons have acknowledged that they owe to the frequent recitation of this ejaculatory prayer their advancement and perseverance in the service of God.

Second Day - Abundant Graces Promised to Those Who Embrace This Devotion

We cannot begin this month better, or better excite ourselves to celebrate it with fervour, than by recalling to mind the magnificent promises which Jesus Christ Himself has made to all those who shall embrace the devotion to His Sacred Heart. Our Lord expressed Himself very clearly upon this subject to the Venerable Mary Margaret; "I would have you know," said He to her, "that you are not to appropriate to yourself those graces which are designed for others also; I wish to make use of your heart as a channel to communicate them to souls according to my designs." He then gave her to understand that it was by a last effort of His love towards men that He had resolved to discover to them the treasures of His Heart, by inspiring them with this devotion, which is to awaken the hearts of the most insensible to the love of Jesus Christ, and to enkindle those of the least fervent. "Publish everywhere," were the words of Jesus Christ to her, "suggest, recommend this devotion to persons of the world as a sure and easy means of obtaining from me a true love of God; to ecclesiastical and religious persons as a powerful means of attaining to the perfection of their state; and in fine, to all the faithful, as a most solid devotion, and a most powerful means of overcoming the strongest passions, healing the most violent dissensions and quarrels in families, removing the most inveterate imperfections, obtaining a most ardent and tender love of me; in fine, arriving in a short time and in a most easy manner, at the highest perfection." What can be more capable of engaging us to embrace this devotion than such promises, coming as they do from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself? Why cannot I recount," writes the Venerable Mary Margaret, the depositary of the secrets of the Heart of Jesus, "why cannot I recount all that I know of this devotion, and discover to the whole world the treasures of grace which Jesus Christ has laid up in this adorable Heart, and which He designs to pour forth in profusion upon all those who shall practice this devotion? Our Lord proposes by this means to restore many to life by drawing them out of the path of perdition, and to destroy the empire of Satan in souls in order to establish that of His love, which will never suffer any one to perish who shall be

consecrated to Him. Yes, I say it with confidence, did men but know how pleasing this devotion is to Jesus Christ, there is not a single Christian, however feeble may be his love for this amiable Saviour, who would not at once practice it. Endeavour to induce religious persons to embrace it; for they will derive so great a support from it, that it will be sufficient, of itself, to reestablish primitive fervour and the most exact observance in the most irregular communities; and to raise those which lived before in the most exact observance to the height of perfection. My divine Saviour gave me to understand that those who labour for the salvation of souls will have the art of touching the most hardened hearts, and will labour with marvellous success, if they are themselves penetrated with a tender devotion to this Sacred Heart."

Father de la Colombiere was the first to experience this. He recommended this powerful means of salvation to many who addressed themselves to him for the direction of their souls, and amongst them even to Protestants, with whom all the other resources of his zeal had failed, and this with a success at which he was himself astonished. Some obtained an entire conversion of heart by the practice of this devotion, which they had at first rejected: others found in it a means of advancing in perfection, through the abundant graces which they received from God.

"Nothing astonishes me," exclaimed a great servant of God of our age, "when I think of the adorable Heart of our divine Master. In Him we can do all things, even lead unobserved a poor, humble, and loving life in the midst of the world. This Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord is anxious to intercede for us with the Eternal Father, and to inspire us with holy desires; and comes to our aid when it sees us nearly sinking. It removes from our heart, whilst we are little thinking of it, the obstacles which opposed the execution of the will of God; it enables us to surmount difficulties which, a moment before, we looked upon with terror; it is this adorable Heart which takes from us the attraction of the world, and enables us to discover its deceits and false principles.

"Everything, in a word, comes to us from this most Sacred Heart; let it then be all in all to us; let us offer our whole being to it; let nothing remain in us unconsumed by its flames, until at length,

after it has purified our souls, it take them wholly to itself, and secure them in this furnace of love for all eternity."

"One day," says Saint Mechtildis, "the Son of God appeared to me, holding in His hands His own Heart, brighter than the sun, and shedding on every side rays of light; it was then that this amiable Saviour gave me to understand that it was from this divine Heart that all those graces issue which God pours forth unceasingly upon men."

Practice - Do not let a week of this month pass without speaking of the Heart of Jesus, and of the boundless treasures of grace which He has promised to those who shall honour it with a special devotion.

Prayer - Give me Thy love alone, O Heart of Jesus, and I am rich enough! - *Saint Ignatius*

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Third Day - Divine Love the Principal Effect of Devotion to the Sacred Heart

The whole law of our Lord Jesus Christ is summed up in this single word, *Diliges - Thou shalt love*. How sweet and admirable a law! worthy of God who gives it, and alone worthy of man, to whom it is announced. He who made the human heart knows well that there are no chains strong enough to bind it, but those of love. He may have imposed other obligations on His creatures, but they are all summed up in this; Thou shalt love. This is the distinctive commandment of Jesus Christ. *"This is my commandment, that you love."* (John 15:12) My chief injunction, the only commandment which I give you is, that you love Me, that you love one another as I have loved you. It is by keeping this commandment that you shall be known as My disciples. *"He that loveth hath fulfilled the law."* (Romans 13:8) He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. *He that loveth not, abideth in death.* (1 John 3:14)

O Jesus! what return shall we make to Thee for having commanded us to love Thee, and for having assured us so often and so solemnly of Thy love for us?

If, then, all our duties, labours, combats, triumphs, may be reduced to the gaining this single good, the love of God, we are fortunate in having at our disposal a sweet, easy, and infallible means of securing it. This means, and it is within the reach of all, is devotion to the Sacred Heart; the Person who has attached such promises to it is, as we have seen, no other than Jesus Christ Himself. "I promise you," says He, "that my Heart shall dilate itself, to pour in abundance the influence of its divine love upon those who shall render it this homage." And on another occasion, "This devotion shall awaken love in the hardest hearts, and enkindle the least fervent with its flames."

"God shall reign in spite of His enemies," wrote the Venerable Mary Margaret, "and make Himself master of our hearts; for this is the principal end of this devotion, to convert souls to His love."

It may be easily conceived that such is the effect of devotion to the

Sacred Heart. For, indeed, everything about it breathes love. Its object is the Heart of Jesus Christ burning with love; its end is to repair the injuries done to love; its practice, exercises of love. It invites to an attentive consideration of all that can enkindle this love, the remembrance and acknowledgment of the love and benefits of our Lord, especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

What would not Jesus Christ have done for any one who should have faithfully borne Him company during His sorrowful passion, when all others abandoned Him? Or rather, what did He not do for Saint John, who alone attended Him to His last sigh? He made him, in some sort, a second self, leaving him the last and most touching pledges of His love; His divine Mother for his own, His cross for a token of remembrance, His Heart for his place of abode.

He reserves the same inestimable gifts of His liberality for those who are touched by the abandonment and solitude of His churches, and the outrages, contempt, and coldness of Christians towards the sacrament of His love, and who resolve to bear Him company, to receive Him into their hearts, and to make reparation each day by their diligence and fervour, in prayer and their self-annihilation in His presence, for the indignities which He meets with so repeatedly at the hands of men. He will not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity; their love will be recompensed by love. He will give it them not by measure; (John 13:34) but with a profusion which will crown and surpass the ardour of those desires which He has formed within them Himself. He has promised to do so; He has pledged His word to it. *"He that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."* (John 14:21)

He has given His word for it. If, in worldly promises, this puts an end to all doubt, what shall we say when the word of Jesus Christ is pledged? Ah I from henceforth, then, let us say, full of confidence, with the apostle: I live in the faith of Jesus Christ who has loved me, and has promised me His love, and in these last times has given me His Heart in pledge of it.

We read in the life of Saint Gertrude that, one day, when she was favoured with an apparition of Saint John the Evangelist, she asked him why it was that, though he had reclined during the last supper upon the breast of Jesus Christ, he had written nothing for our

instruction on the movements of His Heart; and that the Saint replied in these remarkable words; I was charged to write for the infant Church the words of the uncreated Word of God; but God has reserved the sweetness of the movements of His Heart to be revealed in the latter times, in the decrepitude of the world, in order to rekindle charity which will be greatly cooled." We have reached the period of which the beloved disciple spoke to this saint. The fire of charity is extinct in almost every heart; but why should we not have confidence? The devotion to the Sacred Heart, which is extending every where, will rekindle its flames.

Practice - The Heart of Jesus has an infinite desire to be known and loved; it wishes that we should address ourselves to it with great confidence, especially in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In order to rekindle your devotion, remember that a single Mass procures greater glory to God than the merits of all the saints together, and that the blessings attached to this adorable sacrifice, are greater than those which you can gain from your other prayers during your whole life. Many do not know how to occupy themselves during Mass. What rapid progress they would make in the love of Jesus Christ, if they applied themselves to meditate on the Passion and sorrows of His Heart, each time that they assist at this divine sacrifice.

Prayer - "Who shall separate us from Thy love, O Heart of Jesus?
(Romans 8:35)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Fourth Day - Object and End of the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus; Points of Difference and Resemblance in this Devotion and that of the Blessed Sacrament

The devotion to the Heart of Jesus, is an exercise of religion, which has for its object the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, burning with love for men, and outraged by their ingratitude. (*Galliffet*)

It is easy to see that this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus does not merely consist in loving and honouring by a peculiar worship that heart of flesh, like our own, which forms part of the body of Jesus Christ. The object and principal motive of this devotion are, as has been already said, the unbounded love of Jesus Christ for men; and because, in our exercises of devotion, even in those which are themselves the most spiritual, we require some sensible object to remind us of them, and facilitate their practice, Jesus Christ Himself has presented to us His Heart, as an object the most capable of recalling to our memory the love which induced Him to sacrifice Himself for us, and to remain with us even to the end of the world in the adorable Eucharist. As the heart of man is, in some sort, the source and seat of love, it is with reason that we attribute to it the most tender sentiments of the soul. Jesus Christ has a Heart; and if His precious Body and Blood deserve our adoration, who will not allow that His Sacred Heart has still stronger claims upon our homage?

The end which is proposed in the worship rendered to this divine Heart is,

1. To acknowledge and honour, as far as is in our power, by frequent acts of adoration, by a return of love, by a boundless gratitude and devotion, the infinite love of the Heart of Jesus for men, especially in the adorable Eucharist, in which He is so little-known, or at least so little loved even by those by whom He is known.

2. To repair, in every possible manner, the indignities and outrages to which His love exposed Him during the course of His mortal life, and still exposes Him every day in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Heart of Jesus burning with love for us is, then, the object of this devotion; reparation for the contempt shown towards this love, especially in the Blessed Eucharist, is the end; a most ardent love for our Blessed Saviour, and numberless graces, will be the fruit and reward.

The devotion to the Heart of Jesus differs from the devotion to His Sacred Body in the Blessed Eucharist; the one has for its object the Heart of Jesus, without any particular reference to His adorable Body; the other the Body of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species, without any special reference to His Heart. In the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the motive is to honour the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, united with the Word, and by reason of that union truly worthy of the adoration of angels and men. In the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the essential motive is to honour the Heart of Jesus united to the Divinity, and especially to acknowledge the love with which it burns for men, and to make reparation to it for all that it has suffered, and for all that it is willing to suffer daily in His sacrament of love, the most marvellous invention that has ever issued from His divine Heart.

We see, then, that the devotion to the Heart of Jesus, and that to the Blessed Sacrament, though differing in their object, are intimately united; and that the devotion to the Sacred Heart, so far from destroying the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, or weakening it by dividing our homage, embellishes and perfects it. Oh! how rich a treasure we have in the heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! if we do not avail, ourselves of it, it is because we do not know how to turn it to account.

Our divine Lord appeared to Saint Mechtildis, and commanded her to love His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament, and to honour it to the best of her power; and at the same time He gave it to her as a pledge of His love, and as a place of refuge in life and death. From that moment the saint was penetrated with an extraordinary devotion for the Sacred Heart, and received so many graces from it that she was wont to say, "Were I to write down all the graces

which I have received from the most amiable Heart of Jesus, I should write a book larger than the Breviary."

Practice - It is not only a pious practice, but it is a duty, to offer our actions every day to God, for He gave us our being only that we might serve Him. Be careful, then, to do so; but in order to make your actions still more meritorious, offer them through the Heart of Jesus, somewhat in the following manner: "My God! I offer Thee all my actions in union with the merits of the Heart of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin, and of all the saints, and in union with all the good, in opposition to all the evil, which has been, or ever will be done." Or with Saint Mechtildis, who was taught the following manner by our Blessed Saviour Himself: "Most loving Jesus! to Thee I address the first sigh that issues this day from my heart; deign to accept all my actions, that they may be perfected and purified in Thy most gentle Heart, and thus offered, in union with Thy merits, in eternal praise to Thy Heavenly Father."

Prayer - The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones; Thy Heart, O Jesus! shall be my place of refuge.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Fifth Day - Of the Nobility and Excellence of the Heart of Jesus

"I remark several prerogatives of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which may help us to understand its excellence and nobility.

"The Heart of Jesus is animated by the most beauteous soul that God ever drew forth from His treasures. This beauteous soul brought to it from the first moment of their holy alliance, all the riches of grace and glory, and from that moment inspired it with movements so generous, inclinations so noble, qualities so royal, that there is nothing in all other hearts together that can be compared to them. We shall find none that has loved us so much, or that has compassionated our miseries so tenderly, or that has conceived designs so great and so advantageous for us, or, in fine, that has felt such joy at our good." (*Nouet.*)

"Though the hearts of all men should be closed against you, yet do not be troubled, for the Heart of Jesus will always be faithful and open to you." (*Lanspergius*)

Yes, my Lord Jesus! though the enemies of my soul should range their legions against me, sheltered within Thy Heart mine can never fear; though the combat should thicken, my confidence in Thy Heart shall make me come forth victorious; though I should even have one foot in hell, still would I hope in Thy Heart. (Psalm 26:3)

The Heart of Jesus is holy with the sanctity of God Himself; every movement, then, of the Sacred Heart, every sigh, every affection, every request, every action, every desire, as the dignity of His Person demands, becomes infinite in price and value. It is just, then, that it should be honoured by a worship peculiar to itself, for in honouring it we honour His divine Person.

It is within the Heart of Jesus that all the designs of our salvation were conceived, and it is by the love of this same Heart that those designs have been executed. I may truly say that it is to this amiable Heart that I am indebted for every favour, which I owe to each part of His Sacred Body, in the work of my salvation. It is the Heart of

Jesus which wept by His eyes over the tomb of Lazarus, and the city of Jerusalem, sad emblems of the piteous condition to which the world was reduced before His Passion, and to which it will be reduced at the consummation of ages; it healed the sick, and raised the dead, by the touch of His sacred hands; it was His Sacred Heart that guided every step, and directed every journey of this good Shepherd in search of His lost sheep; it forced that bloody sweat from every part of His Body in the garden of olives; it trembled in all His limbs, and cried aloud upon the cross with a voice so mighty, that it shook the earth, and penetrated the heavens, where He was heard for His reverence. (Hebrews 5:7) (*Nouet.*)

What worship, then, what love do we not owe to this Heart, through which every good has come to us! If the heart of an Augustine, a Francis of Sales, an Aloysius, a Theresa, were presented to our veneration, how lively would be our faith, how fervent our love! But here we have the Heart of Jesus, that Heart compared with which all others are but imperfection; that Heart which has ever beat, and still beats for our happiness, is really present in His sacrament of love. And shall we remain cold and insensible? No, Lord, no! I believe, I adore, I love; but do Thou increase my faith and love!

Saint Clare never allowed a day to pass without saluting the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and paying her homage to it with extraordinary care and diligence; and God, to recompense the fervour of His humble servant, never failed whilst she was engaged in this holy exercise, to fill her soul with the purest delights.

Practice - Imitate the conduct of Saint Clare, and never allow a single day to pass without honouring the Heart of Jesus; if you are a member of the association which is consecrated to it, be faithful to the prescribed devotion at nine and at four o'clock, and let your heart accompany the words of your mouth, for Jesus wishes only for the heart, and looks only to the heart.

Prayer - I will sleep and rest in peace in Thy Heart, O Jesus! (Psalm 4:9)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Sixth Day - Of the Nobility and Excellence of the Heart of Jesus

The Heart of Jesus is King of all hearts, by its greatness, power, and merit.

It is the greatest of all hearts, for it bears all enclosed within itself. It is the most powerful, for it can dispose them as seems good to itself. It knows all their secrets, all their springs of action, and can give them whatever movement it pleases. It is the most worthy to command, for it is the kindest, the most amiable, and the most loving; it was through love that it would be wounded to heal all hearts, and to prepare for them a bath of its blood.

Its wound forms its crown; the right which it has over us, is most legitimate. We cannot refuse it obedience without injustice, for we are indebted to it for everything; nor without madness, for it commands nothing but what is for our good: its sole object, in the pressing invitations which it makes us to give ourselves to it, is to render us happy as well as holy.

Let us honour, then, the Sacred Heart, since it possesses such nobility and excellence; let us adore it, since it is the Heart of a God; let us follow all its movements, since it is the infallible rule and principle of all the good which is done in the world; let us submit our wills to it, since it is the King of all hearts. Let us regard it as a royal and divine signet; let us stamp it upon our own hearts that we may receive from it all its characters. *"Put me,"* says Jesus Christ, *"as a seal upon thy heart,"* that is to say, according to the explanation of Saint Anselm, let me rule your heart and your thoughts, that I may be the director of all the actions of your life. *"We must place Jesus Christ as a seal upon our forehead, upon our heart, and upon our arm,"* says Saint Ambrose; *"upon our forehead, to make public profession of our faith; upon our heart, to establish there the reign of His love; upon our arm, to labour without ceasing for the increase of His glory by the practice of good works."* Let us exhibit the image of His greatness in our words, affections, and works, and, if possible, let us try to express His virtues in ourselves,

for He is the seal of uncreated sanctity which the Eternal Father has engraved with the point of the nails, the thorns, and the lance, in order to stamp our souls with the seal of His humility, sweetness, patience, love, and His other perfections.

Whenever, then, O Christian soul, worldly ambition flatters your heart with treacherous promises, or the world dazzles your eyes with its false lustre, raise your mind aloft to heaven, and, as Saint Jerome advises, give ear to those words of the Spouse: *"Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm."* (Canticles 8:6)

Let us beg of Jesus Christ, then, to turn our hearts and those of all men towards His own, and to make them docile to the pressing invitation by which He urges us to devote ourselves to His Divine Heart, when He says, "O all ye who are parched with thirst amid the false pleasures of all the world, come to My Heart, the centre of true joys, the fountain of living waters; poor needy beggars, thirsting for the gifts of grace, draw near, drink and quench your thirst; come, receive without money; why wear yourselves out in seeking after deceitful goods, which cannot satisfy your craving hearts? Here true riches are to be found; My Heart is their source; the deeper you draw from thence, the more will your hearts be satisfied." *All you that thirst, come to the waters*, etc., (Isaiah 55:1)

Yes, it is amongst Christians, the truly favoured people, that the prediction of the same prophet is fulfilled; *"You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."* (Isaiah 12:3) But if all His wounds are so many fountains of grace, we may say with truth, that that of His Heart is the most life-giving and abundant.

Saint Frances of Rome relates that she saw the wound of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and that there issued from it a spring of living water, and that she heard these words; "I am that love which calls aloud, if any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. I wish to refresh those who answer to my call; it is for this that I have opened my Heart, to receive them within it as in a place of refuge." (B. iii. c. 4.)

Practice - Offer your prayers to God each day through the Heart of Jesus; it is the way to render them no less meritorious than powerful. The following is the form which Mary Margaret employed

for this purpose:

"My God! I offer Thee the Heart of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, in thanksgiving for all the blessings which Thou hast conferred upon me; for my petition, my offering, my adoration, and all my resolutions. Receive it, O Eternal Father, to supply for all that Thou desirest of me, for I have nothing to offer Thee which is not unworthy of Thee except Jesus, my Saviour, the possession and enjoyment of whom Thou Thyself hast given me."

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus, Victim of love, be propitious to me a poor sinner!

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Seventh Day - Of the Nobility and Excellence of the Heart of Jesus

The Heart of Jesus is the altar upon which He offered to the Creator the most agreeable sacrifice in the world. It is upon this same altar that we should place all our vows, and offer our whole hearts; for it is from thence that He receives and listens to them. It is from thence that all the honour that creatures have ever paid Him, all their praises, sacrifices, adoration, and love, derive their efficacy, and even this united homage is as nothing in comparison with the honour which this same Heart singly renders to the Sovereign Majesty, for it alone loves and honours Him as He deserves.

We can do nothing, then, so pleasing to God as to offer Him the homage and adoration of the Heart of His Son; the surest means of obtaining what we pray for is to address our prayers through the Heart of Jesus, saying to Him in the same spirit as the royal Prophet; Look down upon me, O Lord, in Thy mercy; but, as Thou canst find nothing there which does not deserve punishment, turn Thine eyes upon the face, upon the Heart of Thy well-beloved Son. "O God, look upon our shield behold the face of your anointed one." (Psalm 84:10) Regard me not except through those wounds, which cry to Thee for mercy, and which are all-powerful to obtain it; call to mind the boundless love of the Heart of Thy Son for me a wretched creature, and destroy not the work of Thine own mercy, the fruit of Thy labours.

Saint Gertrude was given to understand one day that all the Religious of her community, who were praying before the Blessed Sacrament, received each a share of divine grace. Some appeared to draw the sacred stream from the Heart of Jesus, others from His hands, or from His feet, pierced with nails, but with this difference, that the further the source was from the Heart, the greater difficulty did they experience, whilst those who drew directly from the adorable Heart obtained more readily and easily what they desired.

It is from the Heart of Jesus that the Church drew her birth; the faithful, then should love it as their cradle, and never quit it. It was

whilst Jesus was wrapped in the sleep of death that the Church came forth from His Heart; He wished His Heart to be opened, in order that she might be able to glory in having issued from her Saviour's side. Happy the soul who shall be able to say, at the moment of entering on her eternity, in the words of one of the most ardent Apostles of the devotion to the Sacred Heart: "I used often to say to myself, as I thought of the love of the Heart of Jesus for me; 'the Heart of Jesus is my cradle, my refuge during life, may it be my tomb at death!' He has made me understand the sense of those words, - cradle, refuge, tomb."

"The Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the Church; it watches whilst she sleeps. (Canticles 5:2) Holy Scripture says that the first Christians had but one heart and one soul. I am not surprised; it is the Heart of Jesus which lived in them, and inspired them all with the love of heavenly things." (*Nouet.*) O happy time, when all conspired in holy concord! why may it not reappear amongst those who are united, by one and the same devotion, in the Heart of Jesus? Let us at least direct all our efforts to this object, by setting an example of an unreserved devotion to the Sacred Heart; let us exert ourselves by our prayers and good works, in union with those of this divine Heart, that all true Christians may, as in the first ages of the Church, make but one heart to love the Heart of Jesus, but one voice to praise and bless it, but one and the same soul, the united movements of which may be consecrated to the love and glory of the divine Heart.

Practice - The Heart of Jesus is the cradle of all the Faithful; it is through it that you have been called to the spiritual birth of holy baptism. You will please this Divine Heart if, every morning, on waking, you renew your baptismal engagements. You may make use of the following form, or of any other like it. "O Heart of Jesus! I renounce anew Satan with his pomps and works, and I engage myself wholly to Thee for every moment of my life!" Oh! what graces will this practice draw down upon you! It is enough to defeat all the efforts of the tempter.

Prayer - If any one love not Thee, O Heart of Jesus! let him be anathema. (1 Corinthians 16:22)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Eighth Day - Tenderness of The Heart of Jesus for Men

To dazzling qualities and magnificent titles Jesus Christ joins a tenderness for us. which appears excessive. "My delights" He says, "are to be with the children of men." (Proverbs 8:31) His gentleness is so amiable, that it charmed His most deadly enemies. When a woman taken in adultery is brought to His feet, He refuses to condemn her, and covers her accusers with shame. He allows Himself to be approached by sinners; He mingles with them; He allows Himself to be called, and is, in some sort, the friend of sinners. He sits at the table of publicans and sinners. Whom do you see at His feet, which she appears to have chosen as her place of refuge? Magdalen, a sinner by profession, whom, in return for one single act of love, He pardoned a whole life of disorders and scandals. It was not Magdalen that made the first approach towards this good Master; He knocked, He waited at the door of her heart, before He saw her bending at His feet, bathing them with her tears, and wiping them with her hair. Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much; but far more still because she has been much beloved.

Jesus extends His care even to little children; they are incapable as yet of knowing Him, but His gentleness attracts them to Him. The Apostles repel them; suffer them, says He, suffer little children to come to me; and He caresses them, blesses them, and deigns to take them into His sacred arms. Should their father and mother abandon them, He will take care of them; for though even a mother should forget her children, yet will He never forget them. See also how He receives the prodigal, who, prostrate at His feet, confesses that He is no longer worthy to be called His son; how He runs to meet him, folds him in His arms, bathes him with His tears, and fully restores him at the first token of repentance, to his inheritance and his father's love. This incomparable Pastor passed through the land, scattering his benefits on every side. *Pertransiit benefaciendo*. His fold alas! presents but too many sick; with His own hand He dresses their sores, heals their wounds, and pours in oil and wine; He restores sight to the blind; at His command the paralytic and lame

arise and walk. A mother mourns the loss of her only child; the Heart of Jesus is touched at the sight; He knows what sorrow and tears so many fondly loved children will cost Him by falling into the frightful death of sin, and forthwith says, Young man I say to thee, arise! and restores him to his mother.

See Him seated by the well of Jacob, wearied with His journey; He is waiting for the Samaritan woman; His Heart seeks for her, and leads her to come in search of the waters which spring up to eternal life. He excites in her soul a heavenly thirst, to which she had been hitherto a stranger; He reveals to this great sinner the secret of His divine mission. See Him at the grave of Lazarus, whom He deigns to call His friend. He weeps, and the Jews cannot refrain from exclaiming in admiration; "Behold how He loved him!" (John 11:36) A little later, and the approaching ruin of Jerusalem, that guilty city, which is ere long to demand His death, will force from Him with tears, that touching lamentation, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!"

What is His behaviour with His Apostles? With what patience does He bear with them? Judas betrays Him, and He deigns still to address Him by the gentle name of friend; "Friend, do what you are here to do." (Matthew 26:50) It is the name He had given them all in the touching discourse which He addressed to them after the Supper, when He said to them; "I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends." (John 15:15) Peter denies Him, and, without complaint or reproach, by the sweetness of a single look, Jesus melts the unfaithful Apostle into tears. In a word, the whole life of our Blessed Saviour is nothing but gentleness and love for men.

But these toils, labours, and watchings are not yet enough. This amiable Saviour has said; "The good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep" Jesus will give His life, and will suffer Himself to be put to death by His sheep for them. Before completing His sacrifice, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. He assembles His Apostles, and at His last supper, what does He? Ah! whoever knows this gift of God, can find no expressions to speak of it worthily. O loving invention of that amiable Heart,

above all His works! Other shepherds feed themselves at the cost of the lives of their sheep, but Jesus finds a means of giving Himself as food to His; He loves them to such an excess, that He would become one with each of them, and remain even to the end of the world as the comforter and companion of their exile.

And yet these ungrateful sheep have attacked their Shepherd; they have reduced Him to such a condition, that He can say with truth, that from head to foot He is but one wound. Will Jesus avenge Himself upon His sheep? Yes, by loading them with fresh favours. He is on the point of breathing His last, He has nothing remaining of Himself. He has given, He has sacrificed all. But He has yet a Mother; He will give her to us to be our own. Jesus looks down from His cross upon His beloved disciple, who, during the Supper, had reposed upon His Heart; "Behold Thy Mother He says to him; and Mary adopts us for her children. He died for the sins of men, He will rise again for their justification, to give an incontestable proof of His life and death. He will ascend to heaven and pour down His graces in greater abundance upon His favoured people. The most precious gift amongst His treasures, His holy Spirit, He sends down upon them; and He ceases not even now to make His wounds, and especially that of His Sacred Heart, plead like eloquent mouths for mercy upon sinners, and for grace and love for the just.

Practice - One day, as Saint Gertrude was laying before our Lord a trouble which sensibly afflicted her, our Divine Master, making her repose upon His Heart, said to her; "It is here that you will live sheltered from all affliction; but every time that you abandon this spot, you will be again seized with bitterness of heart, as a salutary antidote to remind you that I am the only all-powerful Comforter." Profit by this lesson; in all your doubts, distresses, and affliction; address yourself to the Heart of Jesus, as a child to its parent, as a friend to his Mend, beseeching Him to be your light, your support, your comforter, and not to allow you to find peace or consolation except in Him.

Prayer - I have found the Heart of my King, my Brother, my loving friend Jesus; what more can I desire in heaven, or seek upon earth? (Saint Bernard)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Ninth Day - Tenderness of the Heart of Jesus for Men

The activity with which fire consumes inflammable matter; the rapidity with which a stone seeks its attracting centre; the impetuosity with which the swiftest rivers hasten to the ocean, do not equal the ardour with which the Heart of Jesus burns to communicate itself to souls, when they dispose themselves by removing sin, which alone presents an obstacle to the effects of His divine love.

Before I had any being, the Heart of Jesus already beat for me, sighed for my salvation, desired to give itself to me, thought of me, watched over me, was anxious for me. That Heart is so full of love for me, that it condescends to come and knock at the door of my heart, and to beg an entrance. (Apocalypse 3)

Our Lord revealed one day to Saint Gertrude two admirable and loving pulsations of His Divine Heart. "By each of these two movements," He said, "I work the salvation of men. The first is for sinners, the second for the just. By the first beating of my Heart, I speak, in the first place, uninterruptedly to God my Father; I appease Him, and incline Him to mercy towards sinners; I then address myself to all my elect, leading them to excuse, with fraternal charity, the faults of sinners, and to pray for them; lastly, I speak to the sinner himself, mercifully calling him to penance, and awaiting his conversion with unspeakable desire. By the second beating of my Heart, I speak in the same manner to God, my Father, and invite Him to congratulate me for the blood which I shed so fruitfully for the redemption of my just, in whose hearts I find my delight in so many ways; I then call upon all the host of heaven to praise me for the admirable lives of my saints, and to render me thanks, in their behalf, for all the benefits with which I have loaded them, and continue to load them. Lastly, I address myself to the just themselves, caressing them in different ways, and exciting them to advance daily and hourly in my love. And, as the beatings of the human heart are not checked by the action either of sight or hearing, or of any other sense, so in like manner, neither the

government of heaven or earth, or of the whole universe, nor anything else in the world, can arrest, moderate, or slacken for a single instant, even to the end of time, these two movements of my Heart for men." (Inst, 3:52)

Ah! Lord, Thou hast said, "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." We must needs, then, be Thy treasure, since Thy Heart is so continually occupied with ours. O incomprehensible love of God, how small is the number of souls to whom thou art known I Why art thou not known to all? Why art thou not proclaimed throughout the whole world to the learned, and to the ignorant, to the just and to sinners, to those who seek thee, and to those who flee from thee, since all are loved by thee?

"The saints are ravished at the excess of this love, and truly they would have reason to be astonished, if all hearts were made like our own; but God has placed such merits in the Heart of His Son, that He cherishes even our own in consideration of Him.

"No, O Lord! I am no longer astonished at Thy wishing to be called the God of my heart, *Deus cordis mei*; at Thy being jealous of my love, at Thy seeking its affection so earnestly; but I am astonished that my heart should reject Thee, and that it can hesitate to give itself wholly to Thee." (*Nouet.*) What, O Lord! can then Thy Heart, so great, so holy, so perfect, love me? What do I say? He commands me to love Him, and shall I not do so, I who should rather beg on my knees, that I might be allowed to do so? For alas! who am I that I should be raised to such an honour, that Thou shouldest deign to unite Thy Heart to mine, and think only of me? *What is man, that you magnify him? or something do you set your heart on him?* (Job 7) *what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man[a] that you care for him?* (Psalm 8:5) My body is nothing but a heap of dust; my soul is the grave in which Thy favours lie entombed; my heart is mere ingratitude, my memory forgetfulness, my understanding darkness. (*Nouet.*) Alas! how then canst Thou love me, my God and my love? How canst Thou love me, and permit me to love Thee? (Saint Bernard) This incomprehensible love of God towards His creatures not only astonishes and ravishes the angels and saints who meditate upon it; it is also the terror of the devils, the object of their constant jealousy, the only good which engages their attention

in this world, and of which they would fain rob the souls of men. Forced by the power of the prayers of the Church to make this remarkable avowal, Satan once said; "I traverse the whole earth, I observe the interests which occupy the minds of men, their wars, their politics, their governments; I see the buildings they raise, their arts, their sciences; I laugh at all this, as I would at the labours of an anthill; what wholly engages my attention, is to thwart the love of God towards His creatures; I gladly quit idolatrous empires for Christendom, to harass and trouble a soul as soon as it has undertaken to serve God. Our joy consists in disquieting a heart which tends to union with God." (*Surin.*)

Defeat, then, the tempter's designs, by giving wholly to God that heart of which He is so jealous; love Him, Christian soul, whom He cherishes so fondly, with all your heart, with all that heart which He has Himself given you, so large, so generous, so tender, so devoted, so insatiable in its affections, only that it may be turned towards Him who alone can fill it; answer to the invitation which He makes you; "My son, give me thy heart." (Proverbs 23:26)

Practice - We are told in the life of Mary Margaret, that the angels did not disdain to join her, in paying an uninterrupted homage of love, adoration, and praise to the Heart of Jesus. Address yourself, then, to the holy angels, and especially to your guardian angel who watches at your side, and prays unceasingly with you and for you; conjure them to supply, by their ardent love and continual union with the Heart of Jesus, for the coldness and unworthiness of your prayers. Ask also sometimes the angel guardians of those with whom you have to do, to inspire them with devotion to this Divine Heart.

Prayer - As the hart pants after the fountains of waters, so my soul pants after Thy love, O Heart of Jesus! (Psalm 41:1)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Tenth Day - Riches of the Heart of Jesus

Our Lord informed me, says the venerable Mary Margaret, that it was His great desire of being loved perfectly by men that had made Him form the design of manifesting His Heart to them, and of giving it to them in these latter times as the last effort of His love; that in it He opened to them all the treasures of love, grace, mercy, sanctification, and salvation, which this Heart contains, in order that all who wish to pay to Him, and procure for Him all the honour and love in their power, might be enriched in profusion with the treasures of which that divine Heart is the inexhaustible source. "Behold my Heart," said He, at another time, to the same saint: "it is so impassioned with love for men that, unable to contain within itself the flames of its charity, it must needs shed them abroad by your means. It wishes to manifest itself to them in order to enrich them with those precious treasures which I discover to you, and which contain sanctifying graces suited to draw them from perdition."

"The Sacred Heart of Jesus," says a great servant of God, "is the seat of all virtues, the source of all blessings, the retreat for all holy souls; this adorable Heart is ever burning with love for men, ever open to shed upon them every sort of grace, ever touched with a sense of their evils, ever disposed to receive us, to serve as an asylum to us, a place of rest, a heaven even in this life. Come to it, then, you especially who are laden with crosses, temptations, and miseries; the Sacred Heart invites you, waits for you, presses you; it wishes to give you consolation; it is to you that it addresses itself when it says, "Come to me all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matthew 11:28)

It is in this adorable Heart, says Saint Peter Damian, that we find every weapon proper for our defence, every remedy for the cure of our ills, the most powerful succour against the assaults of our enemies, the sweetest consolations to relieve our sufferings, the purest delights to crown our souls with joy. Are you afflicted, do your enemies persecute you, are you troubled at the remembrance of your sins, is your heart tossed with uneasiness, fears, or passions? Ah! come, throw yourself at the foot of the altar; cast yourself into

the arms of Jesus Christ; enter into His very Heart; it is a refuge and retreat for holy souls, and a place of perfect safety; it is the treasure of heaven. Saint Thomas says that, in his time, it was usual to represent at the foot of the crucifix a virgin, who received in a chalice the Blood that issued from the sacred Wound of the side, and another who shed it on the earth; the one bore a rich crown upon her head, the other allowed hers to fall to the ground; the one wore a smiling aspect, all radiant with light, the other had a sad and gloomy look. The first represented the faithful soul, who by meditation receives from the Heart of Jesus joy, light, and a crown of glory; the other, the unfaithful soul, who by sin loses these three incomparable gifts, the light of grace, the joy of a good conscience, and the crown of glory.

"O sweet Jesus!" exclaims Saint Bernard, "what riches dost Thou contain within Thy Heart, and how easy is it for us to enrich ourselves, for in the Blessed Eucharist we possess this infinite treasure! What riches do we lose from not knowing how to use them! Jesus Christ Himself has promised that those who beg for graces through His Sacred Heart shall receive them in abundance; and we see that those who have practised this devotion with a lively and ardent faith, have obtained by this means what they had failed to obtain before by repeated and persevering prayer."

As Saint Gertrude heard one day at Mass those words of Holy Scripture, "To thee and to thy seed I will give all these countries;" our Lord, placing His hand upon His Heart, explained to her what that land was of which, in His boundless liberality towards His creatures, He here spoke. Upon this, the Saint, entering into this mystery of love, exclaimed; "O blessed and beatific land, region of delights! so overflowing is the beatitude Thou containest, that the smallest grain were enough to satisfy the eager desires of all the elect, and surpasses all that the heart of man could ever imagine as desirable, amiable, agreeable, delectable, and sweet."

Practice - You know what are the terms in which the sentence of life will be pronounced by the Son of God, on the last day, upon His elect: "Come, ye blessed of my Father; I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was naked, and you covered me." These words are applicable, in their true sense, to the care which we shall have

taken of His suffering members, the poor; and we cannot meditate on them too often, for the Son of God makes our charity towards our brethren the rule and measure of His eternal mercy towards us.

But it must be acknowledged that, owing to the indifference of the greater part of Christians for Jesus Christ, this amiable Saviour is truly in the Blessed Sacrament the first among the poor whom we ought to relieve. Be careful to see, then, especially in country churches, that whatever is employed in the service of the adorable Sacrament be kept with becoming cleanliness and decency. Work with your own hands, or get others to work, for churches; and in preference to any brilliant decorations, offer linen necessary for the service of the altar. Your offering will be pleasing to Jesus Christ in proportion as it admits of less ostentation, and as He sees in it a proof of the reverence which you bear towards His Sacred Body. This is a good work, of which He deigns to be Himself the object; this is that ointment which He would willingly see poured over His divine Body, and the pouring out of which He praised on the eve of His death.

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus I how late have I begun to love Thee!
(Saint Augustine)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Eleventh Day - Sorrows of the Heart of Jesus

"It was not the lance that first wounded the Heart of Jesus; He had been wounded by love from the first moment of His life; this was His first and deepest wound which He could not Himself conceal." "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart." (Canticles 4:9) (*Nouet.*)

The Heart of Jesus was again wounded by His compassion for our miseries, which inflicted on Him as many wounds as He beheld evils in us.

He was wounded by sorrow for our sins, bearing in His Heart sorrow and contrition for the crimes of the whole world, as He afterwards bore their punishment in His Body. This was a far heavier cross than that of Calvary, on which He died, for it began with His life, and ended only with His death.

"The sufferings in store for Him," we are told by Saint Angela of Foligno, "presented themselves to His mind, and saddened His Heart, from the first moment of His existence, and this not confusedly, but in the clearest and most distinct manner. He foresaw that after a sad and toilsome life of thirty-three years, all the circumstances of which were ever present before His eyes, He should be sold and betrayed by one of His disciples, denied by another, abandoned by all, chained, struck, buffeted, accused, blasphemed, calumniated, scourged, crowned with thorns, led to Calvary, loaded with His cross, crucified, put to death, and pierced with a lance; this He saw and meditated upon during His whole life. Such a prospect could not but be attended by a bitter sadness, and an inconceivable grief of heart and mind." You may judge by this how lively and constant were the sorrows of the Heart of Jesus.

Let us hear the venerable Mary Margaret, or rather Jesus Christ Himself, on this subject: "One day, as I was praying before the Blessed Sacrament, which was exposed upon the altar, Jesus Christ, my divine Master, presented Himself to me all radiant with glory, His five wounds shining like five suns. Flames issued on every side

from His Sacred humanity, but especially from His adorable breast, which resembled a furnace; in the midst of this burning furnace He showed me His amiable Heart, which was the source from whence those flames burst forth. It was then that He discovered to me the inexplicable wonders of His love, and to what an excess He had carried it towards men, from whom He received in return only forgetfulness and ingratitude. It is this, He said, which afflicts me more than all that I suffered in my Passion, so much so that if they did but make me a return, I should count but little all that I have done for them, and I would willingly, were it possible, do more still; but they show me only coldness and aversion, in return for all my eagerness to do them good."

The Heart of Jesus suffered not only every hour, but every instant of His mortal life; for, as He taught the venerable Mary Margaret, His whole life was passed in love and privation, and consumed in sacrifice. Oh! what courage this sight should give us! how light, and how short are our sufferings, when compared with those of the Heart of Jesus! I am no longer astonished, O Lord, that a Saint John of the Cross, who had meditated upon them, on Thy demanding what He desired in recompense for his services, should have replied; To suffer and to be despised for Thee; that a Saint Theresa, animated with the same sentiments, should have exclaimed: To suffer or die! If the barren soil of my heart does not yield such generous sentiments, at least, O Jesus, let me practice a perfect resignation amidst all the sufferings Thy love shall provide for me.

Practice - Our Lord Himself begged the Venerable Mary Margaret to set apart the first Friday of each month for the remembrance of the sorrows of His Heart. Form the resolution, then, to offer a Communion to the Heart of Jesus, as far as may be in your power, on the first Friday of every month, with the act of reparation, in atonement for all the negligences which may have attended the Communions you have made in the interval. It would also be very pleasing to our Lord, if you formed the intention of making reparation, not only for your own negligences, but also for those of all Christians.

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults! teach me to bear with patience contempt and contradictions.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twelfth Day - The Wound of the Heart of Jesus

"All the wounds of our Lord are so many gates of salvation, thrown open to all the world; but the wound of His Heart is the widest.

"All His wounds are so many fountains, whence His graces flow in abundance; but the wound of His Heart is the clearest and most refreshing.

"All His wounds are so many streams of purple, in which we may plunge the powers of our soul, and thus heighten the price of our thoughts, words, and actions; but the wound of His Heart gives them a deeper colour, a brighter lustre, a more precious tint.

"All His wounds are so many characters of the book of life, in which is contained the science of the saints; but the wound of His Heart instructs us in a deeper learning than them all.

"All His wounds are places of refuge, in which the greatest criminals may find their retreat; but the wound of His Heart is the most favourable and most secure.

"The wound of His Heart speaks, like an eloquent tongue, within the secret depth of our hearts, it reminds us of the love which Jesus bears us, and asks for our love in return." (*Nouet.*)

Let us hear the devout Saint Bernard on this subject: "This adorable Heart," says he, "was pierced, that by means of this visible wound we might gain some knowledge of the invisible wound which love has inflicted on it. Ah I how could Jesus convince us more powerfully of His love, than by allowing not only His body, but even His Heart to be pierced for us?"

The melancholy and disgust, which we feel in this life, are often hurtful to our souls; it is for this reason that the Heart of Jesus has taught us to enter into His wounds, especially into that of His Sacred Heart, in order that we may find there a source of joy and consolation. Blessed Henry Suso, whilst plunged one day in a deep

melancholy at the thought of the uncertainty of his salvation, heard a voice from heaven, which consoled him greatly. "Arise," it said to him, "and enter into my wounds; for it is in them that your only happiness is to be found." "I can feel no terror at the sight of the multitude of my sins," says Saint Austin, "as often as I call to mind the death of our divine Lord; for my sins cannot outweigh the merits of such a death. The nails and the spear tell me that I am truly reconciled to Jesus Christ, if I love Him. Longinus opened for me the side of Jesus Christ with his lance; I entered therein, and there I rest full of security. Let him who fears, love; love casts out fear."

"O amiable wound!" exclaims Saint Bonaventure, "it is by you that I have found an entrance even into the very bowels of the charity of Jesus Christ. There I take up my abode; there I find an abundance of consolation beyond all that I can express. Oh! the blindness of the children of Adam, who know not how to enter into Jesus Christ by His sacred wounds! Through them the happiness of angels is opened to us; the wall, which closed the entrance against us, is broken down, and yet we neglect to enter! Believe me, blinded men, did you but know how to enter into Jesus Christ by these sacred openings, you would there find an admirable abode. What sweetness does the soul taste in uniting itself, through those sacred wounds, to the Heart of Jesus! I have not words to explain it; make but the experiment, and you will find therein a treasure of every good.

"Here the gate of Paradise is thrown open; the flaming sword, which guarded its entrance, has been turned aside by the soldier's lance; the treasure of wisdom and eternal charity is disclosed; enter in, then, by the opening of those divine wounds. O happy lance, which was found worthy to make such an opening! Oh I had I been in its place, never would I have quitted my Saviour's side, but I should have said; 'This is the place of my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.' Faithful soul, created to the image of God, how canst thou fail to be transported out of thyself I behold thine amiable spouse, who, by an excess of love, has opened for thee His side, in order that He might give thee His Heart!"

We read in the Chronicles of Saint Francis, that a gentleman of

rank, who had entered a monastery of the order, not finding there the enjoyment and pleasures which he had abandoned, resolved to betake himself again to the world. The temptation was so strong, that no consideration could restrain him. But observing, as he was going away, a crucifix, on the road by which he passed, he threw himself on his knees before it, to beg for mercy. Oh! how tender and good is the Heart of Jesus! He had no sooner finished his short prayer, than he felt himself raised in ecstasy; at the same time our Lord presented Himself to him, with His Blessed Mother, and asked him why he was going away; he replied that, having been accustomed to live delicately in the world, he could not bear the austerity of the rule. Upon this, our Saviour, showing him the wound of His side, comforted him, saying: "My son, bring hither thy hand, and dip it in the blood of my wound, and you will find that everything will be easy to you, however difficult it may appear in itself." The novice obeyed; and afterwards, whenever any temptation or annoyance came upon him, he called to mind the Passion of the Son of God, and the loving wound of His Heart, and found that every difficulty changed at once into holy delights.

Practice - Set apart one day in the week to honour the Heart of Jesus in a special manner; the Friday, for example, which has been appointed for this purpose by the Church. Pay a longer visit than usual, that day, to Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament, and read some book which treats of His Sacred Heart; this will help you to keep alive your fervour in this devotion; for, if you do not supply it with fuel, it will be in danger of soon dying out.

Prayer - May my eyes, and my heart, O Jesus! remain for ever fixed on the wound of Thy Heart! (2 Chronicles 7:16)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Thirteenth Day - Four Desires of the Heart of Jesus

I find four vivid flames which burnt continually in the Heart of Jesus.

The first is the desire which He expressed to His Apostles, the night of the Last Supper, when He addressed them in these words: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15) This shows us with what ardour we should go to the holy Table, to receive the Bread from heaven; we can never desire to receive it as earnestly as He did to give it to us. For it seems as if this adorable mystery was the centre of all His actions, and that, when He had accomplished it. He regarded himself as having so happily finished the course of His life, that, after this masterpiece of love, nothing remained for Him but to suffer and die for us.

And this is the second desire, which His Sacred Heart, so insatiable in showing its love for mankind, sufficiently manifested when He said; "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened, until it be accomplished (Luke 12:50) What was this baptism, but a baptism of blood? The Heart of Jesus regarded the Cross as the altar, upon which He was to consummate the sacrifice of propitiation for the redemption of the world; and it was for this reason that He sighed after it, and so eagerly desired it.

The ardour, with which He longed to suffer, was but the effect of a third and still stronger desire, that burning thirst for the salvation of souls, which made Him exclaim in the extremity of His sufferings; "I thirst." O Heart of Jesus! what is this burning thirst which consumes Thee, and makes Thee droop upon the cross? I burn with the desire of your salvation, your repose, your sanctification, your eternal happiness.

But the fourth and strongest of all His desires was to glorify His Father, and to make Him reign by love in the hearts of men. "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12:49) Such were the holy ardours of the Heart of Jesus; such is the example, upon which all the saints form

themselves; such is the fire which warms, burns, and inflames their hearts. (*Nouet.*)

They go with an indescribable hunger to the holy Table, like Saint Catherine of Genoa, who, at sight of the Sacred Host in the hands of the priest, exclaimed: "Quick, quick, bring me the bread of life!" They desire to suffer, in order that they may become like to Jesus Christ. Thus Saint Andrew, on catching sight of the cross which was prepared for him, exclaimed, in transports of joy; "Dear Cross! so long desired, so tenderly beloved, object of my unceasing search, and now at last ready to meet the ardent longing of my soul, I welcome thee with joy." It is the glory of God alone that touches them; to procure it they forget themselves, they take for their maxim the device of Saint Ignatius, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, To the greater glory of God. So strongly does their zeal for the salvation of souls burn within them, that, at the prospect of the sufferings and labours which are before them, far from being daunted, they exclaim with Saint Francis Xavier; "Yet more, O Lord, yet more!" or with a great servant of God, of our own age, "Oh! how sad is it to see so many souls, redeemed by the blood of a God, cast themselves into hell with a smile upon their lips, like madmen leaping from some lofty tower! To say the truth, I know of no other sorrow than this, except that which I feel at the thought of my own sins. All else is of the world, and does not deserve a thought."

How far are we from such generous sentiments! how little do we long for the holy Table! how hard does the Cross appear to us! how little are we affected by the salvation of our brethren, and the glory of God! O Heart of Jesus! how ardent is Thy love for me, and how cold is my heart towards Thee! Do Thou change it, for Thou hast the power and the desire to do so.

Practice - Help Jesus Christ to slake that burning thirst for the salvation of souls, with which He is consumed. They are lost, alas! by thousands, whilst you are enriched in profusion with every kind of spiritual good. Jesus complains of your indifference for souls which have cost Him so dear; He waits but for your prayer, to allow Himself to be disarmed: "I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge, and stand in the gap before me in favour of the land, that I might not destroy it; and I found none?" (Ezechiel

22:30) Oh! if you are insensible to this loving complaint, you do not love the Heart of Jesus. Pray, then, for those poor souls; pray, and you will become an excellent preacher, however little you may think it. It was made known to Saint Theresa that her prayers alone had converted many thousands of Indians.

Prayer - O love of the Heart of Jesus, ever burning, and never extinguished, light up Thy flames within my heart! (Saint Augustine)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Fourteenth Day - What the Heart of Jesus Asks of Man

"The Heart of Jesus has given itself up wholly to us. His Heart is the source of all His gifts, the principle of all His favours. And what does He ask for in return? He asks but for one thing, our hearts. Our Lord asked of Saint Ludegarde, one day, what she desired of Him; "All that I desire," replied she, "is Thy Heart." "I," rejoined our amiable Lord, "desire on my part rather to have thine." It is truly marvellous that the Heart of Jesus, the source of every good, should follow unceasingly after man, and unceasingly solicit him, as if He could not be satisfied without him. And what does He beg of him? His heart; "My son, give me thy heart. Jerusalem, cleanse thy heart"; wash away the stains which disfigure it. Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart." Is there anything, then, that the Heart of Jesus stands in need of? And even should this be, so, can the heart of man satisfy it? What treasure, then, do we carry in this little portion of dust, that Jesus should be jealous of it? Ah! the reason is, that the heart is the first of all gifts, and itself gives a value to all besides. Jesus looks not so much to what we give Him, as to the heart with which we give it. He is jealous of our heart; a single look, a single elevation of the heart towards Him, is capable of ravishing Him with joy; the reason is, that there is nothing which is more truly the property of Jesus, than our heart; it is His own by conquest. Jesus is a warlike and generous monarch, who delights in giving battle and gaining victories. Now there is nothing that can resist Him but the heart. The heart once gained, all is gained. It is for this reason that He places His glory in conquering it; and, when He has once made Himself master of it, I am not astonished that He makes it His kingdom, His heaven, His paradise upon earth.

"The heaven of His glory has not cost Him near so dear as this. To gain this, He is not satisfied, says Saint Bernard, with a word; He purchases it at the price of His blood and of His life. For what is it that He seeks in the crib, and the stable of Bethlehem? What does He ask by His tears and cries? a heart that will love Him. What does He seek, as He journeys through province after province of Palestine? What does He propose to Himself in undergoing so many

toils and hardships? it is to gain the hearts of men and secure their love. What does He seek upon the cross? what in the Blessed Sacrament? what, in fine, in offering to mankind, in this our age, by a last effort of His love, His own most Sacred Heart? It is our hearts that He seeks; and yet He finds none to satisfy His desire. He looks over the earth; He considers all mankind; and amid this vast multitude of hearts, which give themselves each to what they love, there is hardly one that gives itself without reserve to Him." (*Nouet.*)

One day, our divine Lord said to Saint Angela of Foligno; "Were I to find any one who wished to receive me into his soul, so far from resisting, I should willingly comply with this desire; were I to find any one who wished to see me, I should discover myself to him with joy. Should any one wish to converse with me, I should speak to him with gladness and affability; for so dear to me are souls that love me, that were I to find one that loved me more tenderly than my saints in time past, of whom such marvels are recounted, I should enrich it with still more signal favours than I have lavished upon them." Now, no one can allege any just excuse for his being destitute of this love. No; every one has it in his power to love God, for He requires nothing of the soul but that she seek Him; and, if she seek Him, she will be sure to find Him, for she is truly loved by Him, and He is Himself the love of souls. "The love which I bear towards a soul that loves me without disguise," continued our Blessed Saviour, "knows no bounds." It seems to me, adds the Saint, that the wish of our divine Lord was, that the soul should burn, as far as she can, with the same love with which He was consumed for her, and which He would communicate to her, did she only on her part desire it.

"But alas! how few souls are there who aspire after this love! O my Lord! how poor, how abandoned, and neglected art Thou! How am I touched with compassion at the sight of Thy indigence! Tender pity has moved Thy servants to beg for alms in order to relieve the poor. I would fain beg for Thee; I would fain find a heart that will love Thee, and joyfully subject itself to Thy sovereign will. O man! Jesus would have your heart. The heart must needs give itself to some one, for it cannot live without loving, nor love without selling or giving itself away. If your heart, then, is for sale, who has better

claim to buy it than He who alone is its happiness, its end, its everlasting reward? and- if it is to be given away, who is so worthy to become its owner as He who made it? The world demands your heart in order to change it into a hell; the Heart of Jesus asks for your heart in order to make of it a heaven even in this life; - whose claim is to be preferred?" (*Nouet.*) Ah! Lord, my heart is already Thine; I give Thee back what is Thine own. Would that I were master of every other heart, that I might secure them all in Thine!

Practice - Set aside a week every year, and a day in each month, for the sole purpose of repairing the strength of your soul in holy retirement; this is one of the most infallible means of securing your salvation and perfection, and of entering into the interior of the Heart of Jesus, according to the words of Holy Scripture; "I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart." (Hosea 2:14) O sweet converse! what marvellous secrets will it teach you!

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus! Thou soughtest me when I fled from Thee; wilt Thou flee from me now that I seek Thee?

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Fifteenth Day - The Heart of Jesus Invites Us All to Him

"Come to me, all. . . ." (Matthew 11:28) "How beautiful are these words!" says Saint Basil of Seleucia, "Come to me all; I place no bounds to my promises; my Heart is an inexhaustible source of goodness; it can wash away every crime.

"Come to me all, and I will refresh you. The crimes are yours; the remedy is mine; yours are the wounds, mine the cure.

"Come to me all; my Heart is wide enough for all. The ocean of my mercy is vast enough to receive all sinners, who cast themselves therein, like rivers, to drown their offences in its waves.

"Come to me all; for my word cannot remain without effect. It is a net, which I have cast into the sea of the world, to take and enclose all mankind.

"Come to me all; ah! what power is there in these words, which have triumphed over all the nations of the world! what saving, sovereign efficacy, which has bowed the universe in obedience to the yoke of faith." (*Nouet.*)

Venite ad me omnes. Come to me all; come all to my Heart. Come, children, to the Heart of Jesus: never did the most loving mother feel anything that approaches the tenderness with which this Heart burns for you. Come, ye aged, to the Heart of Jesus; He will renew your youth like the eagle's. Come, ye just, to the Heart of Jesus; secured within this retreat, you shall advance each day from virtue to virtue. Come, sinners, come all to the Heart of Jesus, and the robe of your iniquities, were it red as scarlet, shall be made as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18)

'Tis towards those sinners, especially, who have most abused His benefits, that the Heart of Jesus shows itself most liberal; it takes pleasure in verifying in them the saying of Holy Scripture; Where sin abounded, there shall grace more abound.

Strayed sheep of the house of Israel, poor soul, who have wearied yourself in the way of iniquity, perchance you say to yourself in the sad condition to which your wanderings have reduced you; Our Lord has forsaken me for ever; He thinks no more of me. (Isaiah 49:14) Hear how He speaks to a soul, Saint Angela of Foligno, whom He had drawn from the abyss of sin, to impart to her the treasures of His mercy; "My children, who have renounced my kingdom by sinning, and have made themselves slaves of the devil, are received kindly by their Father when they return to Him; and, in the transport of joy which He feels at their return, He bestows graces upon them, which He does not always grant to innocent souls. Why is this? First, on account of the boundless love which He bears them; secondly, because the misery in which they are plunged awakens His mercy towards them; and lastly, on account of the sorrow which they feel for having offended so great and so good a God, of whose mercy they esteem themselves unworthy, acknowledging in their hearts that they have deserved hell. For all these reasons, a person who has sinned more may obtain a fuller share of grace, and meet with more abundant mercy."

When shall I at length respond, O Heart of Jesus! to such goodness and condescension? When shall I give ear to the voice of Thy love? When shall I begin to love Thee? Alas! whenever I give Thee my heart, had I given it Thee from the first moment of my life, still it would be ever true that Thou hadst loved me first, and with a love which I shall never be able to repay.

"The strongest friendship amongst men is that which lasts till death, and for which they count it a glory to die. But the Heart of Jesus is our friend during life, in death, and after death; for He gives eternity to those who love Him. Take, then, this amiable Heart for your friend, in preference to all others, for it alone will remain true to you at the day of your death, when all things else will be severed from you. Be assured that it will never leave you, not even when you see yourself abandoned by your truest Friends, but that it will remain at your side in your last combat against the devil, and that it will deliver you from the power of darkness, and from the fury of those roaring lions which are on the watch to devour their prey at the hour of death." (Saint Augustine)

"Ah! how sweet is it," exclaimed a great servant of God upon his death-bed, "to fall into the hands of Jesus dying for us!" How sweet, too, will it be for you to cast yourself, on quitting this life, into the Heart of Jesus wounded for you, if you respond now to the invitation which He holds out to you, of choosing it as your abode!

Practice - An effectual means of giving comfort to the Heart of Jesus, and one within the reach of all, is to do what you can for the relief of the souls in purgatory. The holy sacrifice of the mass, the application of indulgences, prayers, the least action directed to this intention, are so many means of relieving these souls, to which Jesus has an extreme desire of uniting Himself; His justice prevents His satisfying this desire; He waits, if I may say so, for you to place Him under the sweet obligation of making His divine justice yield to His mercy.

Prayer - One thing I have asked of the Lord; this will I seek after, all the days of my life, that I may dwell continually in His Sacred Heart. (Psalm 26:4)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Sixteenth Day - Now We Should Approach the Heart of Jesus

Approach the Heart of Jesus, in the first place, in the spirit of penance, that you may bewail your sins, and obtain pardon for them; adore Him, like the apostle Saint Thomas, with profound respect, and say to Him with a contrite and humble heart, "My Lord and my God!" Suffer me, my only hope! to seek the remedy for my wounds in the wound of Thy Sacred Heart. Permit me, too, to place my hand in Thy Sacred Side; not to assure myself of the truth of Thy resurrection, but to touch Thy burning Heart, and to replace my hand, thus warmed in this sacred fire, upon my own poor heart, that I may inflame it with Thy powerful love, and consume it with regret at the remembrance of those offences, that forgetfulness, and ingratitude, which have made you sorrowful even to death. "O Heart infinitely holy, and so filled with a sovereign love of purity, that Thou canst not endure the smallest stains, stamp upon my heart a fear and horror of the slightest faults. O Heart, that hast paid the ransom of us all, enable me to break my bonds, to combat my bad habits, to mortify my senses, and to restore to Thee, by my penance, the glory of which I have robbed Thee." (*Nouet.*)

Be assured that this humble prayer will draw down upon you the compassion of this Divine Heart; for, if it is willing to endure that its own creature, this rebellious nothing, this animated dust, should offend and despise it, it is certain that, by a generosity without example, the least act of humility is capable of making it forget all its baseness and ingratitude.

"Go, in the second place, in the spirit of confidence, to the Heart of Jesus, as to your place of refuge, and drown all your sadness, your weariness, your troubles, your pains, and uneasiness in this abyss of sweetness and goodness." (*Nouet.*) The greater sinner you are, the stronger should be your hope in the Heart of Jesus; love alone is never tired of pardoning. Jesus came not for the just, or those, rather, who think themselves such, but for sinners; it is amongst them that He loves to be found; He would be called the Friend of sinners; He runs to meet them, and bathes them in His tears; He

would have greater joy in heaven at the return of a single sinner than at the perseverance of ninety-nine just. Oh! how pleasing, how honourable to Him is your confidence after your falls. It inflicts, as He Himself told Saint Gertrude, a delightful wound upon His Heart. One Holy Innocents' Day, finding herself hindered, by strange tumultuous thoughts which crossed her mind, from preparing herself for Holy Communion, she implored the aid of God, and received this answer; "Whoever, on finding himself attacked by any temptation, takes refuge with a firm hope under my protection, is of the number of those of whom I can say; 'My dove is one, chosen among a thousand; she has wounded my heart with one of her eyes.' So that, were I unable to come to her aid, the desolation, which my divine Heart would feel, would be so great, that all the joys of heaven could not give it relief." And our Lord added; "This look of my well beloved, which pierces my Heart, is the unshaken confidence, which she should have in me, and the assurance, that I can and will come to her aid in everything; this confidence offers such violence to my mercy that it would be impossible for me to abandon her." Saint Gertrude replied; "But since this confidence is so great a blessing, and yet no one can procure it without Thy aid, what are those to do who have it not?" Our Lord replied; "It is in the power of every one to overcome this distrust by calling to mind the words of scripture, and to say with Job, if not with all his heart, at least with his lips; 'Though I should be buried in the depth of hell, my God would deliver me from it; though He should slay me, I should still hope in Him;' and other similar words."

A great servant of God, whose filial confidence and abandonment of himself into the hands of Providence, formed, so to say, his distinctive characteristic, illumined, at death, by a still clearer light, upon the greatness of the mercy of God, exclaimed; "Would that I might be restored to health, in order that I might live henceforth by confidence alone."

In the third place, approach the Heart of Jesus in a spirit of recollection and prayer, by withdrawing yourself from the hurry of business. Then will our Lord hide you under the shadow of His protection, and draw near to you in love, and say to your heart, as He said to Saint Gertrude: "Keep but me in view, direct all the powers of your soul to me alone, and you shall enjoy the sweetness

of my grace." (iii. Insin. 9.) It is the Heart of Jesus that invites you to this repose of solitude and prayer, as He invited His apostles at the close of their labours. Come alone into this retreat, apart from the bustle of the world; and, with the beloved disciple, repose awhile upon the Heart of your Divine Master. Oh! how soon will your strength be repaired; and what deep truths will you learn!

Practice - You have heard, a thousand times, the great maxim of Jesus; "Learn of me; because I am meek and humble of heart:" but you do not understand as yet all its meaning; beg of Him earnestly to give you grace to understand it. Meekness and humility are the virtues, which He brings forth from the good treasure of His Heart, and which He teaches us with the authority of a Master. We are not His true disciples, we cannot be truly devoted to His Heart, unless we are firmly resolved to study and practice them; for the proper character, the soul and substance of all true devotion, is to imitate what we honour. (Saint Augustine)

Prayer - O love of the Heart of Jesus, how little art Thou known!
how little art Thou loved! do Thou make Thyself known and loved!

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Seventeenth Day - The Heart of Jesus is an Unfailing Remedy Against Every Malady of Our Souls, Whatever May Be Their Disposition

The Heart of Jesus is an abyss of wisdom; it is the fulness of every good; you will find in it a sure remedy for all the evils of your soul. Above all, it is an abyss of love, in which we should lose every other love, especially the love of self, with its evil fruits, human respect, the desire of raising ourselves, and the love of our own satisfaction. It is by burying these inclinations in this abyss of divine love, that you will find every assistance you may require, according to the different states of your soul.

"Are you in an abyss of aridity and helplessness? go, plunge yourself into the Heart of Jesus Christ, that abyss of power and love; but do not be too eager to taste the sweetness of that love, except when it shall please Him to impart it to you.

"Are you in an abyss of privation and desolation? this Divine Heart is an abyss of every consolation, in which we must lose ourselves, though without desiring to feel its sweetness.

"Are you in an abyss of poverty, and stripped of everything? plunge yourself into the Heart of Jesus; it is filled with treasures, and will enrich you, if you leave it to do with you as it pleases.

"Are you in an abyss of weakness and miseries? go to the Heart of Jesus; it is an abyss of mercy and strength, and will raise you up and strengthen you.

"Do you feel within yourself an abyss of pride and self-esteem? bury it at once in the profound self-annihilation of the Heart of Jesus; this humble Heart is an abyss of humility.

"Are you in an abyss of ignorance and darkness? the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of knowledge and light; learn, above all things, to love it, and never do anything but what it wishes of you.

"Are you in an abyss of infidelity and inconstancy? the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of constancy and fidelity; plunge yourself therein, and you will find in it a love that loves us constantly, and constantly does us good.

"Do you find yourself buried, as it were, in death? go to the Heart of Jesus; you will find there an abyss of life, a new life, in which, from henceforth*, you will see but with the eyes of Jesus Christ, act only by His movements, speak only with His tongue, and love only with His Heart.

"Do you find yourself in an abyss of ingratitude? the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of thankfulness; draw from its depths all that you would fain offer to God, for all the blessings you have received, and beg of Jesus to supply for you out of His abundance.

"Do you find yourself in an abyss of agitation, impatience, and anger? go to the Heart of Jesus; it is an abyss of gentleness.

"Are you in an abyss of dissipation and distraction? you will find in the Heart of Jesus an abyss of recollection and fervour, which will supply for all your deficiencies, and fix your heart and imagination, by uniting them to Him.

"Are you plunged in an abyss of sadness? bury this sadness itself in the Heart of Jesus; for it is an abyss of heavenly joy, and the treasure of delight to saints and angels.

"Are you troubled and uneasy? this divine Heart is an abyss of peace; and this peace will be communicated to you.

"When you are in an abyss of bitterness and sufferings, unite them to the abyss of the infinite sufferings of the Heart of Jesus; and you will learn from Him to suffer, and to be happy in suffering.

"If you are in an abyss of fear, the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of confidence and love; abandon yourself to it; in it you will learn that fear should give place to love.

"In fine, on every occasion, and under every circumstance, plunge yourself into this abyss of love and charity, and, if possible, never

more quit it, until, like iron in the furnace, you are penetrated with the fire with which this Heart burns for God and man." (Venerable Mary Margaret)

Saint Mechtildis, whilst absorbed one day in God, beheld in spirit Charity, under the form of a virgin, who dipped a diamond in the Heart of Jesus Christ, and frequently repeated the action, in order to give her to understand, that there is no heart, however hard and impenitent, which the Heart of Jesus will not soften to contrition. Though our hearts should be as hard as the diamond, they will be softened by being steeped in the blood of the spotless Lamb, and by being united to the Heart of Jesus.

Practice - Never allow yourself to fall into discouragement, however strong may be your natural inclinations, or however great your faults; call to mind immediately, that you have at your disposal the merits of the Heart of Jesus, to make reparation for them all. Cast yourself into this Heart, which is ever open to receive even the greatest sinners, and say to Him; Ah, Lord! may the deep abyss of my miseries call upon the abyss of Thy mercies; for Thou hast said by the Prophet, that deep calleth on deep. (Psalm 41:8) It would be as impossible for a spark of fire to fall into the sea without being extinguished, as for our fault not to be effaced by this means. It is only in hell that there is no longer hope in the Heart of Jesus. As long as we are in this life, He invites and calls us to Him, however ungrateful we may have been.

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus! Thou shalt be my hope in trouble, and a refreshing shade against the burning heat of my passions. (Isaiah 25:4)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Eighteenth Day - Of the Agony of the Heart of Jesus in the Garden of Olives

Though the whole life of our Lord was a cross and continual martyrdom, from His constantly having before His mind the prospect of all that He was to suffer for mankind, yet it may be truly said, that the most painful moment of this life of bitterness was that in which He allowed all those evils to press together upon His Heart, and endured their full weight and suffering during His three hours' agony in the Garden of Olives. It is hither that souls, who are devoted to this Divine Heart, should repair* to contemplate Him every day, and to measure the full extent of His love. This is the time of the martyrdom of His divine Heart. The physical sufferings of His Passion acted, in some sort, as an alleviation to His sorrow of Heart, and as a satisfaction to His love; but here He suffers without relief and without consolation; He refuses His soul every thought that might give Him comfort. (Psalm 76:4)

Let us consider, then, what were His sufferings during that cruel agony.

The first suffering of the Heart of Jesus was His compassion for His Father. (1 John 4:8) God is charity; says the Apostle whom Jesus loved: the definition is worthy of Saint John; it is worthy of the Heart of Jesus, from whence he drew it, as he reclined upon the breast of his divine Master. This God of love has loved us with an everlasting love; from all eternity have we occupied His thoughts and designs of mercy. (Jeremiah 31:3) When man had forfeited by sin all those gifts which His goodness had destined for him, God, in a still greater excess of liberality, loved him so far as to give him His only-begotten Son, the object of His complacency and affection, and to deliver up this divine Son to the most painful and ignominious death in order to save sinful man. (John 3:16) But the world ignored this incomprehensible love; it would not believe it; it lost all remembrance of it.

Indeed, who is there that meditates on this wondrous prodigy of love, which ravishes the angels and saints of heaven, with

astonishment? Who is there that tries to fathom its depths? Who is there that shows his gratitude for it, as far as it is in the power of any creature to be grateful for so unspeakable a gift?

As no one is so truly a father as God, so it may be said, never did Son feel for the most tenderly loved father so deep a love as that of the Son of God for His Eternal Father; in His agony, then, the Heart of Jesus compassionated, beyond all expression, this incomprehensible love of His Father, outraged by the ingratitude and innumerable crimes with which mankind have repaid it.

The second suffering of the Heart of Jesus, was His compassion for the sorrows of His Mother. To understand what Mary suffered during the sorrowful passion of her divine Son, we should have to penetrate the secrets of her Heart. This Heart was gifted with a power of feeling so noble, so deep, so excellent, that no other mother's heart can bear comparison with it. She alone could say with truth, that the outrages heaped upon her divine Son, rebounded upon her heart. She alone felt all the bitterness of the scorn, the insults, the blasphemies directed against Jesus. She heard the sighs, the groans, the last words of her Son; she saw Him abandoned by His Father, stretched upon the ground, nailed to the cross, and expiring in the most cruel agony, without being able to wipe away the tears which flowed from His eyes, to staunch the blood which streamed from His wounds, or to render Him any of those sad offices which might soothe His last sufferings; above all, without being able to pour the least comfort into His afflicted Heart. As she looked on, she spoke only by her silence and her tears.

What a martyrdom it is to see those, whom we love, suffering; and, still more, to see them suffering on our account! Thus the unspeakable sorrows of Mary added to the sorrows of her divine Son; He made them His own, and bore them in His own Heart, by His compassion for her, during His agony.

Measure then, if you can, the weight of these sorrows which were endured for you; beg of the Heart of Jesus to pour into your heart one drop from that sea of bitterness, which encompasses and penetrates His own; that the sense of the sorrows; which He endures, may give you generosity to suffer and undertake

everything, in order to make some return to so much love.

Practice - Amongst the different practices, which our divine Lord Himself prescribed to the Venerable Mary Margaret, in honour of His Sacred Heart, He taught her that, which is now known under the name of the Holy Hour. "I beg of you," He said to her, "to spend in prayer each Thursday night, from eleven o'clock until midnight, that you may share with me the sorrow which I experienced in my agony; in order to appease my anger against sinners, and to sweeten, in some manner, the bitterness which I felt at that time, at being abandoned by them, and which forced me to reproach them with not being able to watch with me one hour." If age, health, or the wishes of your superiors do not allow your adopting this salutary practice, you cannot at least excuse yourself from forming the intention, and from offering to our Lord, every Thursday evening, in place of the prayer which you cannot make yourself, the prayers of so many holy souls who are faithful to this practice; and you may pray your good angel to take your place near the Heart of Jesus.

Prayer - Oh! who will give me to enter into the interior of Thy Heart, O Jesus!

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Nineteenth Day - Of the Agony of the Heart of Jesus in the Garden of Olives

One day, whilst Mary Margaret was absorbed in meditation on the sadness and agony of our Lord in the Garden of Olives, our Divine Master said to her; "It was here that my interior sufferings were greater than in any other part of my Passion, for I saw myself wholly abandoned by heaven and earth, and loaded with all the sins of mankind. I appeared thus before the sanctity of God, who, without regard to my innocence, punished me in His fury, making me drain the chalice which was charged with all the gall and bitterness of His just indignation; as if He had forgotten the name of Father, that He might sacrifice me to His wrath. No creature can understand the greatness of the torments, which I endured at that time for mankind."

In the next place, compassion for His own sufferings, and for those of the whole human race, combined with this terrible view of His Father's wrath, to fill the Heart of Jesus with agony.

The third suffering of the Heart of Jesus was His compassion for Himself. The anticipation of evils is ordinarily more painful than the endurance of the evils themselves; now Jesus Christ, during His agony, allowed all the torments of His Passion to fall together upon Him, and present themselves to His mind with all the circumstances which made them so full of sorrow and ignominy; He would give Himself a foretaste of all their bitterness, and bear them in His Heart, before actually enduring them in His body. The nails, the cords, the cross, the rods, the thorns, the gall, the vinegar, the spittle, the blows, the purple robe, the sceptre of scorn, the insults of His enemies, the abandonment of His friends, the treachery of one of His Apostles, the denial of the other - He foresaw all, He accepted all, during that painful and sorrowful agony.

The fourth suffering of the Heart of Jesus was His compassion for mankind, whom He loved with a sovereign love. "He did not confine Himself to deploring their loss in general; He felt for the evils of each one of that vast multitude, and grieved for their sins,

not indiscriminately, and in a mass, but individually, and in detail; so that there was no sin that ever was, or ever will be committed, mortal or venial, which did not contribute, in its measure, to rend the Heart of our Lord" (Saint Angela of Foligno). Whoever we are, just or sinners, we all contributed to cast our share of bitterness into this compassionate Heart; we all caused Him this cruel agony. We should count, then, the vast multitude of men who have ever lived, or who ever shall live to the end of time; measure the number and frightful enormity of their crimes, the unbounded love for souls which burnt in this Heart, the ardent desire which urged it to save them all, if we would form an idea of the anguish of the agony of this divine Heart.

To this sight of the loss of so many souls, and of their ingratitude, must be added all the sufferings, all the physical and moral trials of the human race, which cast themselves into this ocean of bitterness, and which our divine Lord was pleased to endure by compassion in His Sacred Heart, in order that we might be able to say truly with the Apostle, We have not a High Priest who is unable to compassionate our infirmities.

Such are the incomprehensible sorrows which encompass on every side, and rend in pieces the Heart of Jesus. Hence it is you hear Him exclaim; My soul is sorrowful even unto death. My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me! You see Him abandoned by His Father, given over to fear and sadness, and reduced to such a state, that a sweat of blood streams from His Sacred Body, and runs even to the ground, forced from Him by the violence of His sorrow, and love, before the executioners, the nails, the thorns, or the scourges, have done their work. Alas! it is because the Heart of Jesus suffers almost as much here as upon the cross; it is because He would be the model, the refuge, and the consolation of all afflicted hearts. The Jews, who witnessed the tears shed by Jesus over the grave of Lazarus, exclaimed in admiration; Behold, how He loved him! (John 11:36) What should you, then, say or think, O Christian soul! at sight, not merely of the tears, but of the blood, which Jesus sheds today, in order to prove to you His love?

Draw near, then, to your agonizing Saviour; compare, if you have the courage, your pains with those which transpierce His Heart, and

beg of the Eternal Father to allow you, all unworthy as you are, to take the place of the angel sent by Him to console Him, to stay beside Him, to watch with Him, as He invites you to do Himself. (Mark 14:34)

Patience and resignation under your sufferings are the consolation, which the afflicted Heart of Jesus looks for at your hands.

Practice - When you are preparing for confession, beseech the Heart of Jesus to deign to receive your heart within His own; that you may have some share of the bitter sorrow which He felt for those sins of which you are going to accuse yourself, and which were present to Him during His sorrowful agony.

Prayer - By Thy Heart, O Jesus! pierced with sorrow, I beg Thee to pierce mine with regret for all its sins.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twentieth Day - Souls Devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Love to Meditate on His Passion

Those burning flames which consumed the Heart of Jesus, those unspeakable sorrows which plunged Him into a sea of bitterness, that immense thirst for our salvation, are prodigies of the love of a God, which would surpass all belief, and defy all conception, had not our divine Lord given us some striking and palpable proof of there.

To suffer and to die for our friends is the greatest proof of love. (John 15:13) This proof the Heart of Jesus has given us; or no; it is not for His friends, it is for His enemies, for those who put Him to death that He dies. And who of us is there, whom He could have loved, says Saint Augustine, if He had not loved His enemies? He loved us whilst we were His enemies, in order to make us worthy of being called His friends. Our Blessed Saviour desires that we should never lose sight of this inconceivable proof of love, the sufferings and death which He endured for us. It is for this that He would renew the remembrance of it every day, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is impossible to be devoted to His Heart without taking pleasure in meditating on the means, so inconceivable and so worthy of our gratitude, invented by that divine Heart in the excess of its love, in order to give a proof of this love to the insensible hearts of men.

It is not only, then, in the garden of Olives, but in the hands of the soldiery; in the streets of Jerusalem; before Annas, Caiphas, and Herod; at the pillar, in the Praetorium, upon Calvary; that hearts devoted to the Heart of Jesus should follow their divine Saviour, and unite themselves to His sorrows, which finished only with His life.

As regards the fruit and merits of such meditation, all the saints agree in extolling them with one voice. Saint Austin tells us, that a single tear, shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ, is of more value than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and fasting for a

year upon bread and water. Why is the number of those who love Jesus Christ so small? asks Saint Liguori; because there are so few who meditate on the pains which He endured for us; whoever meditates on them frequently cannot live without loving Jesus Christ. He will feel himself so constrained by His love, that it will not be possible for him to refuse to love a God, who has shown such love, and suffered so much, only that He might be loved. Our Lord Himself said to Blessed Veronica, of the order of Saint Augustine; "I would have all men honour my Passion, by a sincere sorrow, and lively compassion for my sufferings. Should they but shed a single tear, they may be sure that they have done a great deal; for the tongue of man cannot express the joy which is given me by this single tear." The angels revealed to Blessed Jane of the Cross, that the divine Majesty took such pleasure in the tears shed over the Passion of Jesus Christ, that they have a value in His sight equal to that of shedding our blood, or of suffering the greatest pains.

Our Lord said one day to Saint Angela of Foligno; "Whoever wishes to find grace should never turn away his eyes from the Cross, in whatever state he be, whether of sorrow or joy. Those who employ themselves in meditating on my Passion and death, the source of life and salvation, are my true children; others are my children only in name."

The same saint, having been favoured with an apparition of Jesus Christ crucified, heard Him pronounce upon those who compassionate His sufferings, and love to take part in them, these consoling benedictions: "Blessed of my Father are ye, who by compassionating my pains, sharing in my tribulations, and walking in my footsteps, have merited to wash your robes in my precious blood. Blessed are ye, who, compassionating my immense sufferings, and the death which I endured to rescue you from eternal torments, to make satisfaction for you, and to work your redemption, have been found worthy to share my poverty, humiliation and sufferings. Blessed are ye, who faithfully cherish the remembrance of my Passion, the greatest miracle of all ages, the salvation and life of those who were lost, the only refuge of sinners; for you shall share in my resurrection, and in the kingdom and glory which are the reward of my sufferings, and shall be my heirs through all eternity. Blessed are ye of my Father, and the Holy

Spirit; blessed are ye with that blessing which I shall myself give on the day of my justice; for, instead of rejecting me, like my persecutors, when I came into my own kingdom, by your lively sense of my abandonment, you gave me an asylum in your hearts; seeing me tormented with hunger and thirst, pierced with nails, agonizing and dying upon the cross, you would be my comforters and associates, fulfilling thus the works of true mercy. Therefore shall you hear, on the terrible day, those words so full of joy for you; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Your title is incontestable; for I was hungry, and you gave me the bread of compassion to eat."

Practice - The Blessed Virgin, according to a pious tradition, never passed a day without visiting the spots sprinkled by the blood of her divine Son; the Apostles, following her example, and, after them, the Faithful of every age, hastened to traverse this way of sorrows.

The Way of the Cross was established in order to supply, in some manner, the place of this pious pilgrimage. The Sovereign Pontiffs enriched it with the most abundant indulgences. Benedict XIV assures us, that it is the most powerful means of converting sinners, reviving the tepid, and sanctifying the just. Contrive, then, to practice this holy exercise from time to time, especially at the season at which the Church invites us to meditate on the sufferings of our Lord.

Prayer - Never will I forget the sufferings of my God; my heart shall preserve a continual remembrance of them, and my soul shall languish with amazement and gratitude. (Lamentations 3:20)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-First Day - Ingratitude of Men Towards the Heart of Jesus

"Although the Heart of Jesus is no longer actually wounded, yet He has ever endured strange indignities in His person, since the institution of the Sacrament of His love. Can any greater indignity be imagined than the outrages, which the Jew, the heretic, the Atheist, have made Him suffer during so many ages, and will continue to make Him suffer until the end of time?" (*Nouet.*)

But, perhaps, even more deplorable still, is the conduct of those who bear the name of Christians, and who still retain some Christian practices. Jesus condescends to dwell amongst men; (John 1) and to enter even into their hearts; He goes even so far as to express Himself, (O incomprehensible excess of love!) in those astounding words; My delights are to be with the children of men. (Proverbs 8:31) But, O Lord! how art Thou treated by ungrateful men? Thou deignest to reside in the midst of them; and they refuse Thee even a decent dwelling. Whilst they are living in palaces, they have the effrontery to lodge Thee in a hovel. "Dost thou see," said the holy king David, with bitterness of heart, to the Prophet Nathan, "that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God is lodged within skins?" (2 Kings 7:2) O true ark of the New Covenant, of whom the ancient ark was but a feeble figure, O Lord Jesus! who is there, now-a-days, who is disturbed, amidst the wealth that surrounds him, at the thought of the poverty which attends Thee in our churches? Even this would seem but little to Thee, didst Thou but find, in our hearts at least, in the absence of all splendour in our material temples, a ready and respectful welcome. But no! day and night in our sanctuaries Thou art waiting for and calling upon men; whilst days, and nights, and weeks, pass without their answering to Thy call; or if, at times, they make Thee a brief visit, it is but custom and human respect that brings them. They are present, indeed, before Thee in body; but how far from Thee are their hearts! Thou abidest in Thy sacrament of love, ever occupied with the thought of them; ever as a victim in the presence of Thy Father, offering to Him Thy wounds for them; and they, whilst in Thy presence, think of nothing less than of adoring Thee; their very

attitude shows so little respect, that heretics themselves, who deny Thy real presence, reproach them with it. At the time of Holy Communion, during Mass, Jesus offers Himself to them: they hear those words; "Behold the Lamb of God! behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world;" come all to Him! Jesus Himself invites them in those admirable words: "Eat O friends! and drink, and be inebriated with the torrents of my delights, my dearly beloved. Come eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you." (Canticle 5:1; Proverbs 9:5) But all go their way, as though they had no wounds to heal, no stains to efface; they reply, that others have invited them; that they have other friends to serve. Be astonished, O ye heavens! at the sight of this prodigy of ingratitude! (Jeremiah 2:12) O Christians! O senseless and perverse nation! is this the return you make to your Lord and God? (Deuteronomy 32:6)

O Jesus! so tender, so generous, so full of love for us, could we inflict a more cruel wound on Thy Divine Heart? Ah! I hear Thee say to me; I looked for one of those whom I love, to compassionate my sorrow, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none. (Psalm 68:21)

Our Lord Himself testified to the Venerable Mary Margaret how much He felt this indifference; "I suffer," said He, "a burning thirst, to be honoured and loved by men in the Blessed Sacrament; and yet I find scarce any one who exerts himself, according to my desire, to allay my thirst, by making me any return."

Practice - The benefits of God are like a river that flows unceasingly, watering your soul, that city which God has chosen for Himself. (Psalm 45:5) In this world, you can discover but the smallest part of these precious gifts; and, as gratitude is one of the distinctive characteristics of devotion to the Sacred Heart, you should never allow a single day to pass, without recalling to mind the benefits which you have received from God; your creation, preservation, vocation to the true faith, a Christian education, the sacraments, particular graces, graces decisive for salvation, etc. Nay, more; thank God for all the graces, with which He would have loaded you, had you been more faithful, and for all those which He has in store for you; thank Him in behalf of others who, nourished by His

favours, either do not think of returning Him thanks for them, or make use of them only to offend Him. Gratitude is a necessity felt by noble and generous souls, and the surest means of drawing down fresh blessings; whilst ingratitude, on the contrary, dries up their source.

Prayer - What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me? (Psalm 115:3) I will take the Heart of His divine Son, and I will offer it to Him with confidence, that I may thus discharge all my obligations.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Second Day - Complaints of the Heart of Jesus

Let us give ear to the complaints, which the Heart of Jesus deigns to make to us; they are a fresh proof of His love; for He complains, only because He loves; and He loves us, solely for our happiness, without any consideration of His own, which is neither lessened by our loss, nor increased by our salvation. What more ought I to have done for you, says He, O Christian people, and have not done it? in what have I grieved you? answer me. I have set you apart from amongst the nations, which I left seated in darkness, and in the shadow of everlasting death, to impart to you the incomparable gift of the true faith; and you have rendered it fruitless, by your indifference. You were a beautiful vine, which I had planted with my own hands, and you have borne me but bitter fruit; for, in my thirst, you gave me vinegar to drink; and by your ingratitude and coldness, much more than by the point of the lance, you have pierced your Saviour's side. I shed for you all my blood even to the last drop; and what value have you set upon it? what profit have you derived from it? I called you to my kingdom and my inheritance; and you have given me a reed for my sceptre, and a crown of thorns for my diadem, by the inconstancy of your heart, and by the pride and haughtiness of your behaviour. In taking upon me your nature I have raised you to a participation of my divinity, and you nailed me to the cross by your offences.

I fed you, not with the manna which your fathers ate, and which did not preserve them from death, but with that bread from heaven which contains in itself eternal life, and you have torn my mystical body, by denying even this ineffable benefit, which is the admiration of angels. O all ye, then, that pass by the way of life, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to that which my Heart feels at such ingratitude. (Lamentations 1:12)

Our divine Saviour complains, again, to His faithful servant, Mary Margaret, in a manner no less moving; "Behold," said He to her, discovering to her His Heart, "behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to wasting and consuming

itself, to testify to them its love. And nevertheless I receive, from the greater part, but ingratitude in return, through the neglect, irreverence, sacrileges, and coldness which they show towards me in my sacrament of love; and what afflicts me still more is, that I meet with this treatment from hearts which are specially consecrated to me." Another time disclosing to her His Heart all torn and pierced with wounds; "Behold," said He to her, "the wounds which I receive from my chosen people; others are satisfied with wounding my body, but these assail my Heart, that Heart which has never ceased to love them."

Alas! are we not of the number of these ungrateful souls? Is it not of us that Jesus complains; of us, who have been enlisted in His service by holy baptism, and are fed so often with His sacred Body; of us, who are consecrated, perhaps, to His Heart in some association charged with the task of repairing so many outrages, and who are nevertheless so cold, so indifferent, towards this divine Heart? Alas I with what truth may He not say to us by the mouth of the royal Prophet; If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it; but, to be despised and abandoned by my friends, my children, the chosen objects of my love! (Psalm 54:13)

"My Heart," adds our divine Master to His faithful servant, "may truly complain in this mystery (of the Blessed Sacrament) as it did upon the Cross, that it is exposed to shame and grief without consolation. In this abandonment, it seeks for consolation from you, and from a chosen number of fervent souls; I look to you to repair, by your homage, those injuries which are inflicted on me." Ah! if today we hear the voice of His complaints and sorrows, let us not harden our hearts. How happy should we be, if the Heart of Jesus itself were pleased to choose us, as He chose His Apostles, to make Him some amends, and to console Him for the abandonment in which He is left by so many ungrateful hearts! Let us redouble our fidelity, then, in our practices of devotion towards this amiable Heart, and let us protest to Him that, with the help of His grace, we will never abandon Him.

Practice - It is in prayer that you will learn the excess of the love of Jesus for you, and the ingratitude with which you have repaid it. This knowledge will awaken in you regret and love, and will enable

you to undertake all for Jesus. Never pass a single day, then, without making at least a quarter of an hour's prayer. It is one of the most powerful means of salvation; so that Saint Theresa does not hesitate to say, that she will answer for the perseverance of those who are faithful in making their prayer; and that, on the contrary, those who neglect this holy exercise, have no need of devils to drag them down to hell; for that they throw themselves into it, of their own accord. In this, she advances nothing beyond the truth; for Holy Scripture tells us, that the earth is desolate, and filled with woe, because there is no one who considers, or enters into his own heart. (Jeremiah 12:11)

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus! by a prodigy of Thy grace, inflame even my heart, hitherto so ungrateful, with the fire of Thy love.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Third Day - Practice in Honour of the Heart of Jesus

God bestows His graces upon us, every moment of our lives, in consideration of the merits and blood of His Son, and thus places us in the way of gaining boundless treasures for eternity. But we must acknowledge that we every day incur, through our negligence, inconceivable losses. The greater number of our actions lose their value, from want of a right intention. It is time to rouse ourselves from this lethargy; and the best way of rendering our actions as meritorious towards our salvation, and as glorious to God, as possible, is to make use of the following practice taught us by Blossius. "It consists," he tells us, "in offering our good works, and all our actions, to the most sweet and sacred Heart of Jesus, that they may be purified by this divine Heart; for it is so full of love and tenderness towards us, that it is ever ready to complete and perfect the good, with which it has itself inspired us." The Venerable Mary Margaret gave the same advice to a person who had consulted her; "You are grieved at leading a listless life in the service of God: what He seems to suggest to me to say to you in reply, is this; do not be disturbed; to satisfy Him on this point you have but to unite yourself, in all your actions, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; this will serve, before beginning, by way of disposition, and at the end, by way of satisfaction. If, for example, you find that you can do nothing in prayer, content yourself with offering the prayer, which our divine Saviour is ever making in our behalf, in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar; offer the ardour of His love, in reparation for your tepidity; and say, as you perform each action; u My God! I wish to do or to suffer this, in union with the Sacred Heart of Thy divine Son, and according to His holy intentions, which I offer to Thee in reparation for all that is impure and imperfect in my own." In a word, this amiable Heart will supply for all that may be wanting on your part; for it will love God for you, and you will love Him in it, and by it.

One day, as Saint Gertrude was endeavouring to pray with all the attention in her power, she could not avoid, through human weakness, several distractions. Greatly afflicted at this, she said

within herself; Alas! what fruit can I hope for from such a prayer, made with so distracted a heart? Upon which, our Blessed Lord, to console her, presented to her His Heart, and said to her; "Behold my Heart, the delight of the Blessed Trinity; I present it to you, that you may make use of it, to supply for all that is wanting in you; recommend all your actions to it with confidence; it will render them perfect in my eyes; my Heart shall be ever ready to serve you, and will supply for your negligences."

Profit by this instruction; and, whatever you love; whenever you pray, labour, or endure any suffering; love, pray, labour, suffer in union with the affections, prayers, labours, and sufferings of the Heart of Jesus; and, still more, when you have fallen into any fault, after humbling yourself for it, go seek in the Heart of Jesus the virtue which is contrary to your natural inclination, whether it be humility, charity, resignation, or bearing with your neighbour's defects, and offer it to the eternal Father in expiation for your faults. It is a short and easy means of paying your debts, as soon as you have contracted them, and of acquiring an immense treasure of merits. It was the habitual practice of the Venerable Mary Margaret. Address yourself with simplicity, like her, to the Heart of Jesus, and say to Him after your falls; "You see, O Lord! the evil which I have done: pay, if you please, for your poor slave." At night, lay up, within this adorable Heart, all the actions of the day, that it may purify whatever it finds imperfect in them.

Prayer - I sleep; but Thy Heart, which Thou permittest me to call mine, watches for me, over me, and within me. (Canticle 5:2)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Fourth Day - Devotion of the Saints Towards the Heart of Jesus

"There is no one so poor as not to have some place to serve him as a dwelling. The very birds, as our Lord tells us, have their nests, and the foxes their holes. A Christian alone should not be without a home, a wanderer throughout the world. But where can he make his abode so well as in the Heart of Jesus, a more august, magnificent, and holy dwelling than any monarch's palace? The saints knew this well, and it was here they fixed their abode. Saint Bonaventure bore a holy envy towards the lance that opened for us an entrance into this adorable Heart, and said that, had he been in its place, he would never have quitted it. "Would you find me," wrote Saint Elzear to Saint Delphine, "seek me in the wound of the side of Jesus Christ; it is the place of my abode."

"Learn," says Lanspergius, "to take up your abode in this wound. Do you love repose? it is the bed of the Spouse, besprinkled with roses and lilies. Would you rear your good desires to maturity, and bring to light your good works? it is the nest of the Dove. Do you love recollection? it is the solitary sparrow's haunt. Do you love tears and sighs? it is here that the moanings of the turtle are heard. Are you pressed by hunger? you will find here the manna that falls from heaven in the desert. Are you parched with thirst? you will find here the fountain of living water, which issues from paradise, and pours its abundant streams into the hearts of the faithful. Nor need you fear to be badly received; you know too well the endearments which the Son of God lavishes upon those who honour Him. He invites them to repose sweetly upon His Heart, like Saint John; He shows them His opened side, as to Saint Thomas; and gives them to drink from this sacred source." (*Nouet.*)

"Let us draw near," says Saint Bernard, "let us draw near to Jesus; let us exult and be transported with joy, at the remembrance of His Heart. Oh! how good, how delightful it is, to take up our abode in this Heart! I will adore and praise the name of our Lord in this His Temple, in this Holy of Holies, in this ark of the Covenant, and say with David; I have found a Heart, wherewith to pray to my God;

and this Heart is no other than that of my King, my brother, and my most loving friend, Jesus.

"Having then found this Heart, which is also mine, O most amiable Jesus! I will adore Thee, my God I Receive my prayers in this sanctuary of propitiation; or rather draw me wholly within this Heart. O Jesus! a thousand times fairer, and more amiable than all that is most beautiful upon the earth, wash me yet more from my iniquities; cleanse me from my sin; in order that I may be able to approach Thee, and be allowed to dwell within Thy Heart all the days of my life; for Thy Heart has been thus wounded, in order to offer us a secure retreat. Yes, Thy Heart has been opened, that, delivered from distracting cares, we might dwell therein. Who is there, then, that can refuse to love this Heart, thus wounded for us? Who does not feel his heart burn with love for one by whom he is so much beloved? Let us, then, whilst we are still bound in the fetters of this body, make such return as we are able; let us love and embrace this our divine Lord who was wounded for us, and pierced by impious executioners in His hands, feet, and side; let us keep constantly near to Him; that our hearts, still so hard and impenitent, may at length be wounded by the darts, and bound by the chains, of His love."

Saint Thomas of Villanova thus develops the text of the royal Prophet; "The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones. As the Son of God has His abode in the bosom of His Father, so the Church has established her nest in the Heart of her beloved; and, entering in by the opening of His sacred side, she reposes there in peace, and there she hides her children, and shelters them from the storm. This is the Sacred Altar, the inviolable retreat, where the mourning dove secures her young, until the time when, opening their wings for flight, they shall clothe this corruptible body with immortality."

Our Lord gave the Venerable Mary Margaret to understand, that Saint Francis of Assisi was especially united to His Sacred Heart, and that he possessed a particular power of obtaining from it the graces which he asked. Saint Francis of Sales made the Sacred Heart of Jesus his abode, during his life; nor would he allow his holy repose to be interrupted by the most important business, in which

he might be engaged. It would be necessary to give the entire life of Saint Gertrude and Saint Mechtildis, if we wished to cite the places in which they speak of the Heart of Jesus.

Saint Francis Xavier, and an infinity of other saints, whom it would be too long to name, had a singular devotion towards this amiable Heart, even before it had made itself known, as it has done in our own days, to the Venerable Mary Margaret.

Practice - If you cannot go and preach Jesus Christ in distant countries, as a missionary, you can at least make Him known to the hearts of your friends; this is your mission. You are under an obligation to look to the instruction of your household. God will demand of you an account of their souls. These functions, though less brilliant, are not the less meritorious.

Prayer - Happy inhabitants of heaven I who see the Heart of Jesus unveiled, and love it with an undivided and constant love; obtain for me the grace to know and love it, like yourselves, for ever.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Fifth Day - Pictures of the Heart of Jesus

Whoever loves a friend, consoles himself, in some sort, for his absence, by the sight of his portrait; he carries it with him, kisses it tenderly, and often looks at it. This is what the devout Lanspergius advises us to do, with regard to pictures of the Heart of Jesus. "Have by you," says he, "to keep alive your devotion, some picture of this adorable Heart; place it in a position in which you may see it frequently, that the sight of it may enkindle in you the fire of divine love; kiss the picture with the same devotion, with which you would kiss the Heart of Jesus Christ; enter in spirit within this divine Heart; impress your own heart upon it; bury your whole soul within it; pray that it may be absorbed in it; strive to draw into your own heart the spirit which animates that of Jesus, His graces, His virtues, in a word, all the saving power of this sacred Heart; for the Heart of Jesus is an over-flowing fountain of every good."

To say no more; if this were not a salutary practice, would the Church teach her children, as she does, to pay honour to holy images? Saint Theresa remarks, in her life, with that admirable simplicity which is so characteristic of her; "Having but little talent for representing objects to myself, I was extremely fond of pictures. Oh how much those are to be pitied who lose, through their own fault, the help they might derive from them. It is evident that they have no love for our Lord; for they would be glad if they really loved Him, to see His picture; just as persons in the world are glad to look on the portraits of those whom they love."

But nothing is better calculated to excite us to this veneration for pictures of the Heart of Jesus, than the pleasure, which we know it gives Him, to see them honoured. Hear what Mary Margaret says on this subject. "One day, on the Feast of Saint John the Evangelist, after Holy Communion, the Heart of Jesus was represented to me as on a throne, formed of fire and flames, shedding rays on every side, and brighter than the sun. The wound, which He received upon the Cross, was clearly visible; a crown of thorns encircled this sacred Heart; and it was surmounted by a cross. Our divine Saviour gave

me to understand, that those instruments of the Passion signified, that the source of all His sufferings had been the boundless love of His Heart for men; that all those torments and insults had been placed before Him, from the first moment of His incarnation; and that the Cross was, so to say, planted in His Heart, from that moment; that, from that same moment, He accepted all the sorrows and humiliations, which His sacred humanity was to suffer during the course of His mortal life, together with all the outrages to which He was to expose Himself to the end of time, for the love of mankind, by dwelling amongst them in the Blessed Sacrament. My Saviour," she adds, "assured me, that He took a singular pleasure in seeing the interior sentiments of His Heart honoured under the figure of this Heart of flesh, in the manner in which it had been represented to me, environed with flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross; and that He wished that this representation should be publicly exposed; in order, lie added, to touch the insensible hearts of men. He promised me, at the same time, that He would shed in abundance the treasures of graces, with which His Heart is filled, upon the hearts of those who honoured Him; and that, wherever this image should be exposed for particular veneration, it should draw down upon the spot every kind of blessing."

It is said, that the inhabitants of Antioch arrested a violent earthquake, by writing the following words over the doors of their houses: *Christus nobiscum*: state. Hold: Christ is with us! Let us bear upon our heart the image of the Heart of Jesus; and, in all our temptations, we may boldly defy the enemy of our salvation, and say to him; Hold: the Heart of Jesus is with me!

Practice - Bear about you a medal or picture of the Heart of Jesus, and place one in your oratory; do your best to have a chapel dedicated to this amiable Heart, in the parish, or country church, where you reside.

Prayer - Let us go with confidence to this throne of grace, the Heart of Jesus, that we may experience the effects of His mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid. (Hebrews 4:16)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Sixth Day - Four Obstacles Which Prevent Our Obtaining Abundant Fruit from Devotion to the Sacred Heart

I find four obstacles, which stop our progress in true devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The first is tepidity; a truly deplorable state. The tepid soul does only what she cannot omit. Without charity, without fervour, she is a burden to herself; and, so far from advancing in the way of virtue, she falls back. The danger to which persons, engaged in daily practices of piety, are exposed, is that of growing familiar with these holy exercises. To guard against this, they should be constantly afraid of going through them without reverence, attention, and fervour; and should make an effort to arouse and awaken themselves, by meditating on the great truths of faith, and by rekindling in themselves the vivid flames of divine love.

"The state of tepidity is so much the more to be dreaded, as it appears the less dangerous: we avoid more obvious sins, and think that by so doing we are safe; but we forget the words of our divine Lord in the Apocalypse; Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.' As if He would say: 'You deserve not to live within me; you shall have no entrance into my Heart; since you repay my kindness only by the most guilty coldness.' Confessions without amendment, communions without fruit, are the ordinary consequences of this deplorable tepidity. Imagine, then, that our divine Lord, in His desire to draw you out of this sad state, says to you, as He said to Saint Gertrude; 'You have been long enough attached to the earth, in company with my enemies; you have gathered the honey of the consolations of this world from amidst its thorns, long enough; return at length to me, and I will inebriate you with the torrent of my delights.' Accept this invitation of our divine Lord; embrace His hand, pierced with nails for the love of you, which He stretches forth to you in His mercy; and promise Him, that you will follow Him from henceforth, whithersoever He may lead you. (Job 14:15) (Matthew 8:19)

"The second obstacle is self-love. The practice of the Gospel is shortly summed up in that saying of Jesus Christ; 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.' And yet, how few there are who think seriously of this! They have no love or taste for any virtues, but those which are agreeable to themselves, and suit their humour; but how can a heart thus disposed be united to the Heart of Jesus? This divine Heart abandoned itself wholly to us; it reserved nothing for itself. It asks, then, for generous hearts, who have no fear of going too far; of engaging themselves; of placing themselves in the impossibility of drawing back; and to whom all reserve is unknown.

"The third obstacle is our predominant passion, which we would fain humour, and which we cannot bring ourselves to renounce. Even though we had sacrificed them nearly all, yet if there remain but one of this kind, there can be no union of hearts. Examine sincerely what it is that you still reserve to yourself, and sacrifice it generously to the Heart of Jesus; and be assured, that it will cost you less to renounce it altogether, than to gratify it by halves.

"The fourth obstacle is a secret pride. We overcome or weaken all other enemies by the practice of virtues; but it too often happens that this enemy gains strength even by means of certain virtues themselves. It may be said, that, of all vices, there is none which has arrested so many souls in the path of piety; none which has thrown back so many from the highest perfection into tepidity, or even into a disordered life.

"From this spirit of vanity comes the desire we have, to bring ourselves into notice, to succeed in all we undertake; that sadness and discouragement, which we feel when we have met with bad success; that expansion which is produced in us at the sight of the honours which are paid us, or on hearing the praises which are bestowed upon us. This same spirit insinuates itself into the practice of the highest virtues: we are mortified, it may be, obliging, charitable, filled with zeal for the salvation of souls; we are given to meditation, prayer, etc., but we are well pleased, for the edification, as we say, of our neighbour, that we should be known to be so.

"From the same source spring that sensitiveness on the point of honour, those little coolnesses, those annoyances which approach so

near to envy; that secret pain we feel at the success of others, whom we are ever ready to find a means of lowering; that excess even of sorrow and discouragement, upon falling again into some humiliating fault.

"In fine; we pass for spiritual men, we believe ourselves to be such; and yet, our conduct is regulated only by maxims of worldly prudence; we wear but the appearance of piety, whilst, beneath the surface, our passions are alive in all their strength; and, at the hour of death, those who are looked upon as loaded with spiritual riches, find their hands empty of good works: this self-love, this paltry ambition, this secret pride, have robbed or spoiled all. This is the leaven, which sooner or later corrupts the whole mass, the worm which eats into the life of the loftiest oaks. This is the beginning of those stupendous falls, which happen from time to time, in different ages, to afflict the Church, and to give to the Faithful a sad but salutary lesson." (*Croiset.*)

The following instruction, given by our divine Lord to the devout Armella, confirms what we have just said of the obstacles that oppose the reign of the Heart of Jesus within us. "On the eve of the Presentation, it seemed to me," says she, "that I was enclosed within the Heart of Jesus, with so much glory and liberty, that it surpassed all my comprehension. I found myself at large, and at my ease; this divine Heart appeared of so vast an extent, that a thousand worlds would not have sufficed to fill it. I saw, besides, how those, who dwell therein by love, enjoy true and entire liberty, and a wondrous peace; but, on the other hand, I saw that the gate to enter therein, was so small and narrow, that but very few found entrance. Surprised at this, I said; O my love and my all! whence comes it, that Thy Heart is so large and spacious; that we are so much at large when we are once within; and yet, that the entrance is so small and narrow? Upon this our Lord gave me to understand, that it was because He wished that none but the little, the naked, and the solitary, should find entrance. The little are those, who, with all their heart, abase and humble themselves, for the love of Him. Such as these can enter, but others not; for how can anyone, who is puffed up with vain glory, pass through so small a gate? The naked are those, who detach their hearts from all covetousness of the riches and comforts of this life: a® for t others, who are burdened

with heavy loads of gold and silver, or other things, it is impossible that they should be able to pass through so narrow a way, unless they first discharge themselves of this burthen. The solitary are those, who detach their affections from all creatures: for the effect of love is to bind and attach the heart to the object beloved; but it is impossible for two persons, bound and attached to each other, to enter together by a way, in which there is barely room for only one.

Practice - If you desire to obtain a true devotion to the Heart of Jesus, it is important to ascertain whether you have still some one of these obstacles to overcome. The true means of succeeding in this enquiry is by the daily and constant use of the general examen, which Saint Ignatius esteemed and recommended, in some sort, even more than prayer.

To make it well; you should follow the method, which he has himself traced out, and observe these five points.

1. Thank God for the benefits, which He has bestowed upon you.
2. Beg of Him to give you grace, to know and detest your sins.
3. Examine the thoughts, words, and actions of the present day, going through each hour in succession.
4. Beg pardon for your faults.
5. Make a purpose of amendment; and conclude with the Our Father, or any other prayer you may prefer.

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus! give me grace to know Thee, and to know myself. (Saint Augustine)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Seventh Day - Means of Surmounting the Obstacles to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart: Mortification

If you would know how to overcome the obstacles, which your examen has discovered to you, embrace courageously interior and exterior mortification; both are absolutely necessary for arriving at perfection; the one cannot exist without the other.

But the most necessary, beyond all contradiction, is interior mortification; and from this no one can dispense himself. This is the violence which we must unceasingly offer to ourselves in order to seize the kingdom of heaven. In fact, it is impossible to live the life of faith for any length of time, without dying, a thousand times a day, to your inclinations, and the self-seeking of self-love; for the whole employment of a soul in this life consists in loving and hating; loving God with our whole heart, and hating ourselves without reserve.

Opportunities for practising this mortification are constantly presenting themselves: there is no one who cannot mortify his natural disposition, desires and inclinations; who cannot keep silence, when his natural vivacity would urge him to reply, or vanity prompt him to speak. It is in such acts as these that interior mortification principally consists; and we succeed by this means in weakening self-love, and subjecting it to reason, and thus gradually ridding ourselves of our imperfections. It is useless to flatter ourselves that we love Jesus Christ, if we are not mortified; all our practices of devotion, the finest sentiments of piety, are to be suspected, if unattended by this perfect mortification. It was for this reason that when some one was spoken of as a saint, in the presence of Saint Ignatius, "He will truly be so," he replied, "if he is truly mortified."

But it is not enough to mortify ourselves for a time only, and in some one particular; we must mortify ourselves, as far as possible,

in everything, and at all times; with prudence, however, and discretion. A single irregular satisfaction, that you allow to nature, has more effect in rendering her overbearing and rebellious, than a hundred victories, which you might gain over her, would have in weakening her power.

The practice of this mortification is familiar to all such as have a true desire of being perfect. There is nothing that does not afford them an occasion for thwarting their natural inclinations. It is enough, that they have a great desire to see or to speak, to make them cast down their eyes or hold their tongue. The desire of hearing news, or of knowing what is passing or what is said, is to them a constant subject of mortification, and it is the more meritorious, in proportion as it recurs more frequently and is known to God alone. A happy expression, a witty pleasantry, might distinguish them in conversation; but it may also furnish them with matter for a noble sacrifice. Are they interrupted, a hundred times, in some occupation of great importance? a hundred times they will reply with as much patience and sweetness, as if they had not been at all engaged.

Inconveniences, arising from circumstances of place, weather, variety of character, etc., again supply innumerable occasions of mortifying oneself with great merit; and it may be said, that the greatest graces and the highest sanctity depend ordinarily upon the generosity we show in mortifying ourselves, with constancy, on those little occasions, which are unceasingly presenting themselves." (*Croiset.*)

Do not, however, suppose that, by entering on the practice of mortification, you will have to lead a melancholy and hard life; the yoke of Jesus Christ is sweet, and His burthen light. Did the saints deceive themselves when they exclaimed; I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation? (2 Corinthians 7:4) "I am in a country," says Saint Francis Xavier, writing to his brethren in Rome, "where I am in want of all the conveniences of life; but I experience so many interior consolations, that I am in danger of losing my sight, from the tears of joy which I shed." Where is the worldling, who, at the pinnacle of his ambition, or in the full enjoyment of his pleasures, can make a similar avowal?

"A little courage! 'tis the first step only, that demands a sacrifice; make the experiment for yourself; a thing must be worth but little, which is not worth the trial.

"If, after a fortnight of entire and constant mortification," said a great servant of God, "we do not taste that sweetness, which others have experienced, I will allow it to be said, that the life of those who truly love Jesus Christ is wearisome, and that the yoke of our Lord is heavy." (*Croiset.*)

Whatever difficulties you may meet with in renouncing yourself, have recourse to the Heart of Jesus, and they will disappear. One day, as the Venerable Mary Margaret felt so strong a repugnance within herself, that it seemed as if she could not bring herself to obey, upon our Lord reproaching her for her cowardice in conquering herself for the love of Him; "What wouldest Thou have me do?" she said to Him, "my will is stronger than myself." "Place it," said our Lord to her, "in the wound of my Heart; there it will find strength to overcome itself." "O my God!" she exclaimed with transport; "do Thou bury it so deep within Thy Heart, and secure it there so firmly, that it may never escape from thence!"

Practice - Together with the general examen, practice also the particular examen; take, for the subject of it, your predominant defect, or some virtue which you wish to acquire; and practice it in the following manner;

1. On rising, make a firm resolution to be on your guard against this particular defect.
2. About noon, examine whether you have committed any faults, in regard of the point you proposed to yourself.
3. In the evening, institute a similar examen.

The fruit of this examen depends upon the fervour with which our morning resolution has been made, the exactness of our inquiry, our watchfulness over ourselves, the fervour with which we beg the divine assistance, and the care we take to note down our failings, in order that we may observe the progress we make from one day to another.

Saint Ignatius practiced this exercise with such exactness, from the time of his conversion, that, even on the day of his death, he was still careful to note his faults in a little book which was found under his pillow. The most eminent persons of his order have imitated the fidelity of their Founder in this salutary practice. If they thought that they were not doing too much, in taking such precautions, can we regard them as beneath us, or as imposing too irksome a restraint upon us?

Prayer - O Jesus! may Thy desolate Heart teach me to avoid, despise, and hate all earthly satisfactions. (Blessed Henry Suso)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Eighth Day - Means of Obtaining Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

First Means: Prayer

The first means for obtaining an ardent love for Jesus Christ, and a tender devotion to His Sacred Heart, is prayer.

"We may well be astonished that Christians are not, so to say, all powerful, possessing as they do a sure and infallible means of obtaining all that they desire, and this means consisting only in asking. There is nothing, to which Jesus Christ has so frequently and solemnly pledged Himself, as to hear our prayers." (*Croiset.*) Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive.

Prayer is the first want, which the soul feels, when the Holy Ghost begins to draw it from the abyss of perdition; the first sign of conversion. Ananias was afraid to go in quest of Saul, to whom he was sent by our Lord: what was the proof given him, by which to know that he was no longer a persecutor, but already of the number of the Faithful in heart and will? He prayeth. (Acts 9:11)

Prayer is also the first exercise, which the enemy of souls induces them to abandon, when he would draw them into his snares. Hence it was, that Saint Theresa said; "Would that I had a voice, that might be heard throughout the whole world, and that might repeat unceasingly in the ears of all; Pray, pray!"

Let us pray, then, and pray with confidence, humility, and, above all, with perseverance. Let us never grow weary, never abandon it in disgust. The moment we cease to importune the divine mercy is, perhaps, the very moment, at which it was on the point of granting our request. Prayer, says Saint Laurence Justinian, appeases the anger of God; He pardons the sinner when he prays with humility. Prayer obtains all that it asks for; it triumphs over all the efforts of

the enemies of our salvation; it purifies sinners, changes them, and makes them saints. No sooner had I recourse to God, says Solomon, than He granted me wisdom. I had no sooner opened my mouth to pray, says David, than I received help from God.

Our Lord told Saint Bridget, that His bounty goes far beyond our requests and wishes; and that He would be ready to give, at any moment, did we but bring, on our part, suitable dispositions.

"But, of all prayers, there is none that can be more pleasing to Jesus Christ than that in which we beg of Him a love of His Sacred Heart. Let us pray; let us entreat: it is impossible to beg this earnestly, and not obtain it. The means are easy and efficacious, and we may say that, in this matter, to ask is to obtain. Make use of this Sacred Heart itself to support your request, and doubt not but that it will be favourably received." (*Croiset.*)

Saint Mechtildis declared, a short time before her death, that having, one day, begged of our Lord some great grace, in behalf of a person who had asked her to do so, Jesus Christ said to her; "My daughter, tell the person for whom you are praying, that she must seek all that she desires, in my Heart, and that there she will infallibly find it. Let her cherish a great devotion to this Sacred Heart; let her ask all that she desires through this Sacred Heart, like a child that knows no other artifice than that which love suggests to her, of asking of her father all that she wishes."

Practice - You can do nothing more pleasing to the Heart of Jesus, than to unite yourself to Him frequently by spiritual communion, which consists, according to Saint Thomas, in an ardent desire of receiving Jesus Christ, and an affectionate gratitude, as if we had actually received Him; these desires and affections you can awaken in yourself, at every hour of the day or night. Our Lord expressed to the Foundress of the Convent of Saint Catharine of Sienna, at Naples, the pleasure He takes in these spiritual communions, by showing her two precious vases, one of gold and the other of silver, and telling her that in the golden vase He kept her sacramental communions, and in the silver vase her spiritual communions.

Prayer - If I forget Thee, O Heart of Jesus! let my right hand be forgotten; let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember

Thee! (Psalm 136:5)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Twenty-Ninth Day - Second Means of Obtaining a Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Frequent Communion

Devotion towards the Sacred Heart of Jesus is properly an exercise of love. It is enough, then, to know what Holy Communion is, to understand that there is no surer means of being soon inflamed with love for Jesus Christ, than by frequently approaching to this divine Sacrament. It is impossible, says the Wise man, to carry fire in one's bosom and not be burnt. This sacred fire is the adorable Eucharist; which, as Saint Bernard calls it, is the love of loves. Oh! did the soul but consider attentively what passes in this Divine Sacrament, says Saint Angela of Foligno, it is certain that, seeing herself so strangely loved, all the iciness of her heart would be changed into flames of love and gratitude.

Let us frequently approach this source of all good; there, united and incorporated with Jesus Christ, the author of grace, we shall daily receive its streams in fresh profusion; our evil passions, imperceptibly weakened, will at length wholly disappear; that inclination for evil, which we carry about with us, will be changed into a sweet attraction towards every virtue of which the Heart of Jesus is the sanctuary, and of which He gives us an example in this adorable sacrament. There, possessing, though hidden from our eyes, the treasure of Heaven, we shall receive the pledge of everlasting happiness, promised to those who worthily approach this Sacrament of love; for, whoever possesses Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, can want nothing for his perfection, and eternal salvation; so that, after Communion, the faithful soul may say, with Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi; All is accomplished. For, indeed, this heavenly food contains in itself every good, and lays up in the soul every grace, gift, and virtue; so that the faithful soul, that enjoys it, has nothing more to desire.

Alas! how many graces do we lose, by not placing ourselves in a condition to communicate more frequently. The Faithful of the primitive Church communicated every day; and how great, in consequence, was their faith and fervour! Alas! did we but know

what pain we inflict on the Heart of Jesus by our indifference towards the Blessed Eucharist! One day, our divine Lord said to the Venerable Mary Margaret; "I have a burning thirst to be honoured and loved by men in the Blessed Sacrament; and yet I find scarce any one, who tries to allay this thirst, as I desire, by making me some return."

Let us be no longer of the number of these ungrateful souls; let us often approach the Holy Table with due dispositions; it is the surest means of giving consolation to Jesus Christ, and gaining His Heart. But, if we already have the happiness of communicating often, ah! why do we not make a better use of so powerful a means of perfection and salvation? Why, after so many communions, do we continue still the same, still tepid, cold, and without energy to conquer our defects? Alas! is it not because we go to Jesus Christ with a heart attached to creatures, filled with an esteem for the goods, the honours, the enjoyments of this world; with a heart impenetrably barred against the shafts of divine love? Is it not because, though Jesus willingly receives our hearts within His own, we on the contrary close our hearts against Him? for, as He has Himself said, he alone that abideth in me and I in him can bring forth abundant fruit." (John 15:5)

Why, then, do we not cast ourselves with faith and confidence at the feet of Jesus Christ, really present within us, and say to Him from the bottom of our hearts; "No, Lord! I will not let Thee go, until Thou hast blessed me; I will not rise until Thou hast given me strength to overcome those inclinations which separate me so frequently from Thee, and an efficacious and insatiable desire of doing and suffering all for Thy love, and always and on every occasion accomplishing Thy holy will." Let us remind Him that His own glory requires Him to make a heart, which has become His sanctuary, worthy of Himself. And what is there that He can refuse us, after having given Himself wholly to us?

Practice - Endeavour to make yourself worthy, as far as is possible, to communicate frequently; and do not forget that, on the preparation and thanksgiving, which should accompany this great action, depends all its fruit. Saint Theresa says, that one of the reasons, why we receive so scanty a supply of grace, is that we do

not turn to sufficient account those moments during which Jesus Christ is really present within us; and that He has hardly entered our hearts when we turn our back, as it were, upon Him, and entertain ourselves with other thoughts.

Prayer - When shall I come and appear before the face of my God? when shall I be allowed to possess Him within my heart? (Psalm 41:3)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Thirtieth Day - Third Means of Obtaining a Devotion to the Sacred Heart; Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

The Blessed Eucharist does not benefit those only who receive it; to gain from it some of the fruits of life which it contains, it is enough to visit Jesus Christ in this adorable sacrament; to desire it; to think of it; to turn in spirit towards some church in which it reposes. Such was the practice of a great number of saints, and of Blessed Alphonsus Liguori amongst others. There is nothing, that gains the Heart of Jesus more surely, than these frequent adorations and visits. This adorable Heart is in His Sacrament as a living fountain, which flows unceasingly night and day, and asks only to pour itself into all hearts, to purify and fertilize them. He Himself invites all to come and draw from thence the waters of life, and seems to cry aloud, amidst the silence of His sanctuaries, as He did formerly from amidst the crowd of Jews, who were assembled at Jerusalem for a great solemnity; If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37)

But the solitude, that reigns in His churches, tells us too plainly, that He is not more heeded now, than then. Hence it seems as though He would fain seek reparation, from among the small number of faithful souls who answer to His call, for the insensibility of others; for it is during these visits, which they pay to Him, that He delights to shed upon them His graces in greater abundance; and it may be said that there is no favour, which He bestows upon them more commonly at that time, than the grace of His love; for, as friendship is maintained and increased amongst men by frequent visits and conversations, so it is by the same means that we obtain a more ardent love for Jesus Christ.

Speak to Him, then, faithful soul, during the visits which you pay to Him, as a child to its father, as a spouse to the most amiable of spouses. At one time, lay before Him your spiritual infirmities; Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick. (John 11:3) At another, thank Him for His benefits; Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me praise His holy name. (Psalm 102:1) At another, praise

His goodness; How good is God to Israel! (Psalm 72:1) At another, His mercy; O Lord, Thy mercy is above all Thy works! At another, His love; O Heart of Jesus, wounded and languishing with love, what shall I say of Thee, and of the excess of Thy love? Annihilate yourself in His presence; Shall I speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes? (Genesis 18:27) Lastly, enter within the tabernacle itself, and establish your abode there. Then cast yourself, with Magdalen, at the feet of Jesus; bedew them with your tears, kiss His sacred Hands pierced for the love of you, repose upon His Heart with the disciple whom He loved, and protest to Him, that it is there that you wish to take your rest for ever, both in this world and in the next, without looking elsewhere for joy or consolation. (Psalm 131:14)

You cannot urge want of time, as an excuse for your neglect in visiting our Lord. How much time do you find to waste in useless conversation! Shall it be said that it is for Jesus alone, that we cannot sacrifice five minutes? Yes; five minutes' conversation with Him in His adorable Sacrament is enough to satisfy His Heart. What! perhaps you live under the same roof with Him; you have to go but a few steps to visit Him; and you refuse Him this slight mark of gratitude, which He is ready to recompense by the most signal favours. Is it right to pass by the house of a friend, an ancient religious was wont to say; to live so near him, and yet not go in to greet him?

"Father Salès, of the Society of Jesus, was filled with consolation, whenever he heard the Blessed Sacrament spoken of; he was never tired of visiting it; if he was asked for at the gate, if he returned to his room, if he had to go a few steps through the house, he would always contrive to renew, on each occasion, his visits to his dear Lord; so that there was hardly an hour in the day, in which he did not - visit Him. It was this that merited for him the happiness of dying by the hands of heretics, in defence of the doctrine of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament."

Aloysius Gonzaga, Stanislaus Kostka, Berchmans, those angels upon earth, and admirable models of youth, found no joy but in the presence of Jesus in His adorable Sacrament. They left their hearts with Him, when they were obliged to be absent from Him. There it

was that Xavier would come, to rest himself after the labours of the apostleship, and gain fresh strength for encountering new dangers. In a word; devotion towards Jesus, annihilated upon our altars, has been the devotion of all the saints. Let it be ours also.

Practice - Make a firm resolution not to allow a single day to pass without making several visits to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, if you live in some place where He thus resides; or, if you have not this happiness, go once a day, at least, into a church, for this purpose. Let your special object in these visits be to honour the Heart of Jesus, and to make reparation to Him for all those who are indifferent towards Him, or who set themselves against the devotion towards this adorable Heart.

Prayer - O Jesus, my God! Thou whose discourse can never tire, speak but one word to my soul; speak today, speak always; and never be silent.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Thirty-First Day - Fourth Means of Obtaining Devotion to the Sacred Heart: A Great Devotion Towards the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Mary has all power over the Heart of Jesus; she is the Mother of fair love; it is to her that we must address ourselves, if we would have its flames enkindled in our hearts.

The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary are too much alike, and too closely united, for one not to lead infallibly to the other; with the difference, that the Heart of Jesus more particularly favours pure souls, whilst the heart of Mary purifies those which are not so, by means of the graces which she obtains for them, and prepares them to be received within the Heart of Jesus. Sinners should never despair of obtaining this grace through Mary; she is the refuge of the miserable, the resource of the whole world. Without a tender love towards this Mother of mercy, we can never hope to obtain an entrance into the Heart of Jesus.

One day as Saint Gertrude was repeating, with great devotion, those words of the Salve Regina; Turn, then, thine eyes of mercy towards us; the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, and showing her the eyes of the Infant Jesus, whom she held in her arms; "These," she said, "are the eyes, full of mercy, which I can turn at pleasure upon those who invoke me." Let us cherish, then, a tender love for Mary; we shall soon be inflamed with an ardent love for her Son. This is the recompense, beyond all price, which she obtains for all who are devoted to her. Every good has come, and will come, to us through Mary alone; Omnia per Mariam. Whoever has found her has found life and salvation.

There can be no difficulty in approaching this tender Mother, for she tells us herself that she prevents those who seek her, and that she shows herself first to them. Yes; it is she who inspires us with the desire of loving and serving her, in order that she may enrich us with all the treasures which are deposited in her hands. It is

through her hands that every grace must pass, which the Heart of Jesus designs to shed upon us.

Let us address ourselves, then, to Mary, and especially to her heart, the perfect image of the Heart of Jesus: to that Heart; which was so constantly united to the Heart of her Divine Son, that it shared, each moment, His feelings, His joys, His labours, sorrows, and His love for us. Never shall we find Jesus without Mary, nor Mary without Jesus.

Let us invoke Mary, especially by her Immaculate Conception, her dearest privilege, which exempted her from the sad necessity of being, for a single instant, the enemy of her God; and let us be sure, that she will never refuse us anything. Let us never separate the Heart of Mary from that of Jesus in our devotions; let us honour and love them both from the bottom of our hearts; let us devote and consecrate ourselves wholly to these amiable Hearts. Let us address our requests to God the Father through the Heart of Jesus; and let us approach Jesus by the Heart of Mary; we shall obtain everything from the Father by the Heart of the Son, and everything from the Son by the Heart of the Mother.

Blessed Hermann never passed a day without paying his homage to the Heart of Mary; and, every day of his life, he received signal favours at her hands.

Blessed Mary of the Incarnation used no other means than this; she had recourse to the Heart of Mary to present her petitions to Jesus, and to the Heart of Jesus to present them to the Eternal Father. The Blessed Virgin herself deigned to tell Saint Gertrude how pleasing this practice was to her, and how meritorious it was in the sight of God. On the eve of Christmas, whilst this saint was reflecting, with bitterness of heart, that she had allowed the season of Advent to pass by, without having done anything specially in honour of the Blessed Virgin; inspired by the Holy Ghost, she offered to Mary, in reparation for this negligence, the most noble and gentle Heart of Jesus, her Divine Son. The Mother of Mercy gave her to understand, that she received this precious gift with gratitude and great joy, and that it incomparably surpassed in merit all other acts that she could have performed to honour Her.

O Mary, Mother of Grace, cast an eye of pity on our miseries, and the afflictions with which we are overwhelmed in this valley of tears; pray to Jesus to open His Heart to us, and teach us to bury our sorrows and our pains in His Divine Heart, which, whilst He was upon earth, was truly a sea of bitterness. Let it be enough for us, to look upon this amiable Heart, as the Jews once looked upon the brazen serpent, to be at once healed of all the maladies which afflict our souls.

Practice - As often as you assist at Holy Mass, offer to the Heart of Jesus the dispositions of His Blessed Mother, as she stood at the foot of the cross; and, when you go to Communion, offer Him in like manner the dispositions of Mary, and her holy transports, at the moment of the Incarnation. He Himself taught this practice to the Venerable Mary Margaret; you cannot doubt, then, that it is most pleasing to Him, and that you can thus repair, with great advantage, all your coldness and backwardness in those sacred actions, the most important in spiritual life.

Prayer - O Mary! I will give myself no repose, until I have obtained from thee the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Thirty-Second Day - Fifth Means of Obtaining a Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: A Particular Devotion to Saint Joseph, Saint John the Evangelist, and Saint Aloysius

The saints in heaven take a pleasure in obtaining for those, who honour them, the virtue in which they themselves excelled, and the means of salvation which most powerfully aided them in attaining perfection. We have before remarked, what an ardent devotion the greatest saints have, at all times, manifested towards the Heart of Jesus; but we will point out three, in particular, to whom you can have recourse, in a more special manner, in order to obtain this devotion.

The first is Saint Joseph. Can we doubt, when we call to mind the privilege, which this glorious saint enjoyed, of carrying the Infant Jesus so often in his arms, and of living with Him familiarly during thirty years; can we doubt, I say, that in the silence of the life of continual prayer, which Saint Joseph led at Nazareth, our Divine Saviour discovered to him, as the first and most highly favoured of all His saints, after His Divine Mother, all the treasures of His Sacred Heart? If, then, you would know and love the Heart of Jesus, go to Joseph; Jesus has placed in his hands all the treasures of His Heart, in order that he might have the power of enriching his faithful clients.

After Joseph, go to the disciple whom Jesus loved, Saint John the Evangelist. To whom can you better address yourself, if you would be inflamed with a tender devotion to the Heart of Jesus, than to the beloved disciple, who reclined, during the last supper, upon that Divine Heart, and was the first to penetrate its secrets; who alone received the last sighs of that Sacred Heart upon the cross; who alone shared the sorrows of Mary, as she beheld that Sacred Heart pierced by the soldier's lance; who alone saw the blood and water flow from thence, as he bears testimony himself; and who was the first to enter into that wound of love, and there to take up his

abode?

As for Saint Aloysius, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the exercise of an interior life and continual union with God, formed his distinctive characteristic. "Oh! how Aloysius loved upon earth!" exclaims Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, to whom it was given to behold the glory, which this saint enjoyed in heaven. "Oh! how Aloysius loved! whilst he was in this mortal life, he was ever winging shafts of heavenly love towards the Heart of the Word Incarnate; now that he is in heaven, those shafts return into his own heart, and are fixed there for ever; for the acts of divine charity, which he then made, fill him now with ineffable joy.

"Oh I how great is the glory of Aloysius, son of Ignatius! Never could I have believed it, had not my Jesus allowed me to see it I Would that I might traverse the whole universe, and proclaim that Aloysius is a great saint; would that I might make his glory known to the' whole world, that God might be glorified in him. He is raised so high in heaven, only because he led an interior life on earth. Who can ever appreciate the merits and virtue of the interior life? No; there can be no comparison between the acts of an interior and exterior life."

This amiable saint is your model, interior souls; Christian youth, he is your special patron. You cannot doubt that he interests himself specially in your welfare; and he has given such proofs of his desire to see the devotion to the Heart of Jesus extended, that you are sure of doing what is agreeable to him, in addressing yourselves to him to obtain the promotion of this object. The following incident will serve to increase your confidence.

In the year 1765, a novice of the Society of Jesus, Nicholas Aloysius Celestini, whilst labouring under a serious illness, and almost on the point of death, saw the angelical Aloysius approach his bed. The Saint addressed him in the most consoling words, and exhorted him to love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to propagate the devotion, as a thing most pleasing to Heaven. Nicholas promised to do so, and received, as a recompense, not only the cure of his malady, but freedom also from any troublesome effects of it; so that, though hardly able, the evening before, to turn in his bed, he was well enough, the following day, to walk several miles in very cold

weather, and to observe the rule, like any other novice. This miraculous cure contributed powerfully to extend the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Practice - Acquire the habit of making, from time to time, ejaculatory prayers, after the example of Saint Aloysius; there is not a more powerful means for advancing rapidly in a short time in the love of Jesus. Those short prayers are like inflamed darts, which go straight to His Heart, and meet with less hindrance from the distractions and languor, which so often interfere with our other exercises of piety.

Prayer - Who will give Thee to me, that I may find Thee alone, O Heart of my Jesus! (Canticles 8:1)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Thirty-Third Day - Of the Zeal, which the Heart of Jesus Looks for in Those Who are Devoted to Him, in Spreading the Devotion to the Sacred Heart

It is not enough to have conceived a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; you must also labour, as far as you can, to extend it. And this will be no difficult matter, if you have only love: the most unequivocal proof of love is zeal. Whoever has no zeal, has no love, says Saint Augustine.

But in what way are you to exercise your zeal? there are three means of doing it; and these are within the reach of every one. The first is example; set an example yourself of a tender devotion to the Heart of Jesus; this is the shortest and most efficacious lesson. The second means is to counsel it; to make it known to those who are unacquainted with it; to encourage and foster it in those who have some beginning of it. The third and surest, as it is also the easiest, is to pray ardently to this Sacred Heart, to make itself known and loved, by means of those interior lights, those secret motions, that enlighten and transform hearts; for this devotion seems to be in a particular manner the fruit of prayer, one of those special graces which our Lord has reserved to be spread in the hearts of His servants by Himself alone.

No one can excuse himself from employing so easy a means as this. The saints, in their enterprises of zeal, knew well the power of prayer over the Heart of God; and hence they never failed to join it to their preaching. For they bore in mind the saying of Saint Paul, that neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:7)

It is related of a Father of the Society of Jesus, that he never preached, without having first spent three hours in fervent prayer, accompanied with abundant tears. A lay brother of the same society, when asked what were the means, which he used, to gain so many souls to God, in his office of Porter, replied; "For one word

that I address to men, I address a hundred to God." Let us adopt the same means, and we may be sure of success.

Let us pray, then; and if our sins make us unworthy to be used as instruments by Jesus Christ in making His Sacred Heart known, let us beg of Him to choose others in our place. Let us entreat Him to send into His vineyard apostles of His Heart; who, penetrated with a deep sense of the advantages of this devotion, may devote themselves to increase and spread life. Yes, let us pray; every thing is promised to prayer. When a holy soul once asked of God, why He did not raise up, in this corrupt age, one of those saints, whose zeal changes, as it were, the face of the whole world; "Men do not pray to me enough was the reply which she received.

The surest means of succeeding in the prayers, which we address to God for the good of souls, is to offer them to Him through the mediation of the Heart of Jesus. This was made known to the Vén. Mary of the Incarnation, foundress of the Ursulines in Canada, as she relates in the second book of her life. Written by herself. "One night, as I was pleading, before the Eternal Father, the great cause of the salvation of souls, I understood by an interior light, that I was not heard by His Divine Majesty, and that He did not, as usual, lend a propitious ear to the vows and urgent entreaties, which I addressed to Him. I annihilated myself at His feet; I sank to the centre of my own vileness and nothingness; that His Divine goodness might deign to teach me what was most pleasing to Him, in order that so I might obtain my request. Upon this, I heard these words; 'Pray to me through the Heart of Jesus, my most amiable Son; it is through Him, that I will hear thee, and grant thee thy petition.' Since that time," continues the saint, "I have always concluded my daily devotions by this practice, and by this means I gain, each day, a fresh profusion of graces, beyond all that I can express."

It would be well to mention here the magnificent promises of Jesus Christ, in favour of those who zealously employ themselves in making known His Sacred Heart. "Our Lord," says the Venerable Mary Margaret, "discovered to me the treasures of grace and love, reserved for those who shall consecrate and devote themselves, to give and procure to His Sacred Heart all the honour, love, and glory

in their power; treasures so great, that it is impossible for me to express them." And in another place; "Our Lord showed me the names of a number of persons, written in His Sacred Heart, on account of the desire they felt that He should be loved and honoured; and He promised, that they should never be effaced."

At the same time, let us bear in mind that our zeal, to be profitable, must be prudent and enlightened. There is a wide difference between the affairs of God, and those of the world; in the affairs of the world, it is necessary to be full of action; in those of God, we must be content with following His inspirations, leaving grace to act, and following its movements with all our power. Devotion to the Sacred Heart must insinuate itself, by the unction of charity, into the hearts of those whom God has chosen for Himself. (Mary Margaret)

Practice - Employ a part of your means in procuring books and medals of the Sacred Heart; and try to spread them where you can. The wicked never fail to find means and resources for circulating their pernicious books; shall we allow ourselves to be outdone by them?

Prayer - O Heart of Jesus, grant that I may be eaten up with a zeal for Thy glory. (Psalm 68:10)

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Conclusion - And He Shall Go In, and Go Out, and Shall Find Pastures

"An important secret, for aiding you to carry out the good resolutions you have formed during this month, is to learn to enter into the Heart of Jesus, to quit the Heart of Jesus, and to re-enter the Heart of Jesus.

"1. Enter into the Heart of Jesus, by recollection and prayer; make great account of prayer, all your life; and, in it, never lose sight of Jesus. Remember how strongly Saint Theresa recommends prayer; enter into it, like her, through Jesus Christ.

"2. Quit the Heart of Jesus, in order to go and labour for Jesus; quit it, as the Seraphim quit Paradise, without being absent from it; preserve, at least, the desire of entering into it again, as speedily as possible. Live always in His presence. Carry Jesus with you, in order to communicate Him to the hearts of those with whom you converse. Quit Jesus, as the ray issues from the sun, without being detached from it; and as Jesus quitted the bosom of His Father, without ceasing to be united to Him.

"3. Re-enter the Heart of Jesus, as soon as possible. This you may do, in two ways; the first is, by frequently lifting up your mind and heart to Him. Whilst occupied in your employments, raise your heart, every hour or oftener, to Jesus, saying, for example; 'O Heart of Jesus! Thou art my strength, my joy, my happiness!' The second manner of re-entering the Heart of Jesus is by examination and penance. Call back your heart from its wanderings; and let it suffer some punishment for them. Lay your head at the foot of the Crucifix; and, if you have sinned by pride, say to Him; 'Trample this proud head, O Lord, beneath Thy feet!' If by impatience; 'Alas! would that I had the lance which pierced Thy Sacred Heart, that I might pierce my own with it, and let forth all its bitterness!' In every fault, that you may have committed, whatever it be, have recourse to our Lord, and say to Him; 'I know well, my Saviour! that Thou art also my Judge; and therefore it is, that I would gain Thee, before Thou judgest me; happy shall I be, if I do penance before

Thou punishest me; for I know well that Thou wilt not have the courage to punish me twice.' Enter, then, quit, and re-enter, in this manner, the Heart of Jesus; it is a means of remaining united to Him, all your life."

Nor have you any reason to doubt that you will be always well received, under whatever circumstances you have recourse to Him; and though you may have been guilty of some negligence, in recalling Him to mind. One Friday, Saint Gertrude, turning towards her Crucifix, said with Compunction; "Alas! my sweetest Lord, what sufferings didst Thou endure for my salvation on this day! and I, ungrateful wretch that I am, engrossed by other cares, have allowed this day to pass, without calling to mind all that you deigned to suffer, each single hour, Thou who art the life of my life, who for love of my love didst condescend to die!" Upon which, our Lord replied to her; "I have supplied for all thy negligence; for, at each instant, I have formed in my Heart all those sentiments, which should have passed through thine; and my divine Heart waited with impatience for this return of thine towards me, in order to offer to God, my Father, all the merits that I accumulated, and which could not be applied to thy soul without this intention on thy part." "In this," adds the Saint, "is manifested the most faithful love of our God, who supplies, in so admirable a manner, for our forgetfulness; and who appeases His Father, by offering Him the regret which the soul conceives for her negligences."

Practice - We cannot better close the different practices, suggested during this month, than by one, which our Lord Himself proposed to the Venerable Mary Margaret: "One Friday, during the Holy Mass, I felt a strong desire to honour the sufferings of my crucified Spouse. Upon this He told me, that He desired that I should present myself, every Friday, a certain number of times, day and night, to adore Him upon the Cross, the throne of His mercy, and prostrate myself humbly at His feet, in the same dispositions in which the Blessed Virgin stood by the Cross during His Passion, and offer to Him those holy dispositions." Our Lord said also to Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi; "If you will honour with particular devotion, every Friday, the hour at which I expired on the Cross, you shall receive in return the choicest graces from my soul, which I gave up at that moment to my Eternal Father; and though you may not

always feel sensibly the effects of this grace, it shall remain constantly present within you."

Prayer - May I live; no not I, but may the Heart of Jesus live in me!

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Prayer of Mother Mary of the Incarnation

It is by the Heart of my Jesus, my way, my truth, and my life, that I approach to Thee, O Eternal Father. Through this divine Heart, I adore Thee, in behalf of those who adore Thee not; I love Thee, in behalf of those who love Thee not; I acknowledge Thy goodness, in behalf of all those who, by voluntary blindness, slight Thy divine Majesty, and acknowledge not Thy favours. I would fain satisfy, through this divine Heart, for the duty of ail mankind. I traverse in spirit the whole world, in search of every soul, purchased by the most precious blood of my divine spouse; in order that I may make reparation to Thee for all, through this divine Heart. I embrace them all, in order to present them to Thee through Him; and through Him I beg of Thee their conversion. Wilt Thou suffer them. O Eternal Father, to refuse to acknowledge my Jesus; to refuse to live far Him, who has died for all? Thou seest, O divine Father, that they have no life, as yet. Ah! give them life, in this divine Heart.

Thou knowest, O Incarnate Word, my beloved Jesus! all that I would say to Thy Fattier by Thy divine Heart, and by Thy holy Soul. In saying it to Him, I say It to Thee; for Thou art in Thy Father, and Thy Father In Thee. Grant, then, in union with Him, all that I ask. I present to Thee all these souls: make them one with Thee.

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The cover image is a statue of the Sacred Heart, date and artist unknown. It is in the Saint Andrew parish church in Neudingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, was photographed on 8 August 2019 by H. Zell, and the image swiped from [Wikimedia Commons](#).

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